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PETEEY SIMMONS AT SIWASH



PETEEY SIMMONS AT SIWASH

BY

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"Homeburg Memories," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY

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NEW YORK

PETER SMITH

1936

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Reprinted 1936.

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PETEEY SIMMONS AT SIWASH

I

FRATS AND FRESHMEN

I never expected to write this confession; and I should not be doing it now, either, if I had not gone back to the old home town last week for a visit, and a dear old lady had not said in kind and anxious tones: "I hope, Peter, you are living an upright life now!"

Here in Chicago I have a splendid reputation. All I do is smoke a reasonable number of cigarettes, take a drink now and then, play a little billiards, go to theaters and have a poker party at home occasionally. I am an eminently respectable citizen; but back home, where I never did anything worse than play ball after school a little too near the

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First National Bank windows, I am regarded as a character who would make a black sheep look like a beaconlight in the darkness. I have a past which I cannot live down, and I am going to explain that past because it makes me exceedingly tired.

Tired is the word — I am tired of being a criminal back home. I want to go back there and enjoy myself. I want the dear old ladies to stop worrying about me. I want mothers to stop pointing me out to their children as I pass, saying to them in awful accents: “My son, there goes Peter Simmons, who was once a boy like you and probably smoked cornsilk cigarettes. When he went away to college he was arrested at the age of seventeen by a policeman!!!”

I am going to write the whole thing out. I would have done it long ago — but, to tell the truth, whenever I have tried to do it my blushes have overheated the pen and stopped proceedings.

Of all the things that have happened to me, about the easiest thing to remember is my first day in Siwash College. I can recall quite readily the night I was graduated from the high school in a

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black suit and a murderous high collar, and recited an essay on the Conquest of the Future, falling off the universe at the end of the third page and remaining suspended in space while I tried to remember the next paragraph.

And I can remember, with scarcely an effort, the evening when I was married against a large, tickly fern with my two clammy hands in white kid gloves, and Allie Bangs exhorting me — when all was growing black before my eyes — to brace up and prepare for the worst, which the boys were then preparing. But whenever I get a dull red behind the ears and begin to perspire with high-tension embarrassment I know I am about to remember the day when my chum Bugs Wilbur and I climbed on the afternoon local train amid the cheers of our admiring friends and started for Siwash College to absorb knowledge and do great deeds.

Of course we knew we were green; but the trouble was, our knowledge of greens was limited. So far as green went we were practically color blind. Our experience with the color stopped

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about two hundred and seventy-four full shades short of our own. New Congressmen are not so green as new freshmen. Neither are new kings nor new baseball stars nor new fathers, because history and statistics help all these folks out. But there is nothing to help the young man who goes to college, because he has no means of suspecting what is going to happen to him. The college itself does not suspect it half the time. If ever a good, high-grade prophet were to be put on the job of mapping out the first week's happenings in a real frisky little college he would quit with an imagination full of stripped gears in less than an hour.

So Bugs and I traveled on blithely together, planning how we would ooze quietly into Jonesville, where Siwash College was, and partially look over the ground for a day or so before bursting upon the institution. And we were just as surprised as could be when a dazzling chap, magnificently caparisoned, strolled out of a group that was devastating the front end of the car and asked us if we were new students.

All at once it occurred to me that perhaps new

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students were not allowed to ride in chair cars, and that we might be breathing air that could be put to a better use. Of course I had paid my fare, but I would willingly get off if I had intruded. I tried to say all this, but I was nervous and my voice ran away in a cowardly fashion. Finally I backed it into a corner of my throat and got a grip on it.

"Y-yes, sir," I said.

"Do you mind my riding with you a little way?" said the personage.

"You're perfectly willing—I mean you're persomely— All right!" said Bugs.

"It's a little hard to get settled and acquainted," said the stranger, who was twenty-one if he was a day, and looked like a man who went in to see governors and talk things over with them. "But it's the greatest school in the world, and you'll be fighting for it in a week. My name's Andrews."

"Mine's Simmons," I said, slipping my cuffs out of sight— Andrews was not wearing striped cuffs— and shaking hands with him.

"Mine's Wilbur," said Bugs, throwing his coat

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over to hide his fancy vest — Andrews was wearing a plain one.

“You’ll make a lot of friends very fast,” said Andrews, “and it’s going to keep you busy judging them and getting hooked up right. Don’t be afraid to consult me. I know pretty much everybody in school. I’m track-team captain and they want me to be president of the Senior Class; but that’s just under your hat, you know. If it would be any help to you I’d like to have you come over and stay at my house until you get registered and squared round.”

“Oh, say now,” I protested, “you don’t mean that! Why, we’d be in the way and everything else. We wouldn’t dream of imposing on you!”

He laughed and slapped us on the back.

“Forget it,” he said gayly. “It’s not really my house. A bunch of us own it together. We’re a sort of society, you know, and chum together. We have great times! We’ve got a pretty big house, about twenty rooms — cost fifteen thousand or so, ballroom and all that; and in the fall we’re only too glad to make things pleasant for a few of

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the right sort of stuff — like you. We'd really take it as a favor. You'll find some pretty nice fellows there. There's Saunders, manager of the Glee Club; Whipple, the baseball pitcher; Allen, halfback; Sanderson — you know old man Sanderson, who runs this end of the Q., B. & C. Railroad — his son. If you'll just come along with me we'll all be pleased. You needn't think I'd ask every freshman I found on a train; but you're good fellows — and, besides, I know something about you. I've heard of your work in the high school."

I sat still a minute, with my eyes sort of blurry. Then I held out my hand again.

"I'll do anything you say," I muttered; "and if you want any one to go out and drag wild horses round by the tails, just call on me. I'd like to pay you back."

He laughed and got up.

"I'll be back in a few minutes," he said. "I want to find some of the fellows you ought to know." He went away and we sat silent for a minute, creaking and stretching inside as we swelled up out of nothing into friends of seniors,

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and able to win the love of great men by our mere looks. It was magnificent! Bugs was dazed. As for me, I kept bulging and bulging; and my busy little imagination, which is always rambling round a few years ahead of me like a fox terrier, was outlining a career for me that would make the authorities enlarge the college to fit me about my junior year. So when another superior, hand-polished chap dropped into the seat I greeted him as if we had been old friends who had once stolen watermelons together.

"Do you know the man you were just talking with?" he asked us in a friendly way.

"Sure!" Bugs rattled off. "That's Andrews, captain of the track team — and a mighty good fellow too." He started a laugh, but cut it short and leaned over to me confidentially. "Of course it's not really my affair," he said in a low voice, "but your friend is otherwise known as Gentleman Sam, the slickest confidence man in these parts. He works the same game every year. Gets hold of a few new students, offers to take them over to his house, borrows what money he can, and then

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skips to work another college. Why they don't arrest him is a mystery! He has some pull, I suppose."

I struggled out of the dust of a thousand air castles indignantly.

"I don't believe it!" I declared flatly.

"Suit yourself!" said my new friend carelessly.

"I warned you anyway. He offered to introduce you to some of the big men, didn't he?"

"Y-yes," I admitted.

"Thought so. He always does. Well, boys, choose your own course. I won't say any more. My name's Ransom, and if you ever want any assistance I'll be glad to do anything I can for you. We always like to help the new boys as much as we can at Siwash."

My mind was flopping round and round, completely out of gear. I was also reducing in size. I fitted the car very comfortably now; in fact the seat was getting large for me. To tell the truth I was getting lost in a forest of plush. We had been roped in by a sharper before we had even reached the college. After all, we were only country boys

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in a great, wicked world; and if we ever needed any one to protect us and keep us from losing our shoes it was now.

Ransom had risen. I held out my hand to him.

"I — I'm much obliged to you," I floundered. "I got taken in pretty easily, I guess. Could you direct me to a nice day nursery? I thought I wanted to go to college, but I'm afraid I'd better wait a while."

"Shucks!" said Ransom heartily. "Don't mind that! Lots of us have bitten on the same game. Why, he got my suitcase and fifty dollars when I came to school. That was what interested me in you. I'll tell you," he said confidentially again; "you fellows had better come over to our house to dinner this evening, if you've no place to go, and make a few acquaintances. I'll give you my word I'll not try to borrow money from you." And we laughed at the joke together.

"I'd certainly like to," said Bugs, "if your friends won't mind having cowfood round the place."

"Not at all," said Ransom; "we've all been cow-

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food. But I think we had better get into the back car, for if that scoundrel comes back he's likely to be ugly. It's an outrage — the pull he's got! No one seems to dare to arrest him."

Ransom proved to be a real good fellow — and an important man in college too. It was wonderful how easy we got acquainted with him. He was calling us Petey and Bugs, and we were calling him Old Man by the time we had reached Jonesville; and we had already accepted invitations to half a dozen social events. We were dazed with the wonder of it all — the fellowship that even reached out fifty miles from Siwash and drew the new student lovingly into the fold. Why, in a week we should know every one in college! We felt a proprietary interest in the school already; and when the train stopped, amid a tremendous cheer from the platform, packed with howling, laughing, back-thumping students, we stuck our heads out of the window and cheered back.

I wanted to get right out and begin embracing strangers, but Ransom would not let me. We had to be cautious, he said, because at any minute the

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sharper might discover us and make trouble. So we dropped off the back platform and started quietly round the riot. We had not gone ten feet, however, before we saw the villain headed our way.

He certainly did look ugly. In two jumps he had Ransom by the collar. They scuffled frantically. I had just gotten in one fair poke at the villain — resolved to die, if necessary, for my friend — when a little chap grabbed Bugs and me.

“Friends of Ransom’s?” he asked hastily.

“Yes,” said I, not without pride.

“Right this way,” he said hurriedly. “Ransom can take care of himself; but they don’t do a thing to new students who get into rows! I’ll drive you up to the house and Ransom will follow. He’s all right!” Before we could object we were in a surrey and driving down the street.

The new boy was one of the finest fellows I had ever met. His name was Briggs, and his sole ambition seemed to be to make us feel at home and comfortable. We would go right to the house, he said, and Ransom would certainly turn up in time for dinner. It was nothing but an ordinary stu-

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dent row, anyhow, and we could not afford to mix in it. We tried to tell Briggs that it was no ordinary row, but that there was a desperate villain at the bottom of it. He just laughed, however, and said that Ransom played guard on the team and ate villains for breakfast. So we leaned back, a little jumbled in our minds, and let Briggs point out all the wonders of the college to us as he drove us slowly past the campus.

After all, we were doing pretty well — Bugs and I. Only two hours ago we had been poor boys, so to speak, without a college friend to our names. Now we were cruising luxuriously about the campus, befriended by great men and accepting invitations to dinner for two weeks ahead. It was great! I began to swell again.

Two beautiful girls hailed Briggs and he stopped the surrey. They begged Briggs to take them uptown, for they were in a tearing rush and just could not walk. They piled in and I stood on the step while Briggs heartened up the old ruin in the harness and started us toward town. The girls were seniors in college; and, though Bugs and I were

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a little more afraid of them than we should have been of grizzly bears, they insisted on becoming intimately acquainted with us. They were wonderfully clever and evidently knew several thousand times more than I could ever hope to learn — but, somehow, everything we said made a hit; and presently we forgot to blush and began to enjoy the ride.

We paraded slowly down the main street; and finally one of the girls got so thirsty, right in the middle of the block, I suggested to Briggs that we stop at a soda fountain. When he got out and went inside, Miss Osterling, who was sitting in the front seat with him, slipped over, grabbed the reins and started the ancient horse up the street on the jump.

Briggs rushed out of the drug store and chased us, with his arms revolving; but the girls giggled and said it was a common joke in college, and that we would drive back and get him pretty soon. So we resigned ourselves to pleasant society and I don't know when I have enjoyed myself more! We just threw aside all reserve and became old



We just threw aside all reserve and became old friends

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friends on the spot; and they told us how glad they were that clever young chaps like ourselves were coming into college, and how dull it had been the year before without us, and how they hoped we'd surely join the Shi Deltas, which was something or other — where we were now going, they said.

My! My! How hot my ears get now as I remember how these girls hung on my words and admired me! Delilah was tongue-tied beside them. By the time we got to what they called the Shi Delta House I was in a haze of pleasure and we were such old friends that Bugs and I had promised to go downtown the next day and have our photographs taken to exchange with them.

Something like a dozen fellows came running down the walk and greeted us with cheers. "Here are two more, boys!" said the girls. Then they introduced us all round and told them of the joke we had played on Briggs, and I never saw a crowd appreciate a joke so. They could not get over it! The girls bade us a lingering good-by, and we promised them right there that if the Shi Deltas wanted us to join their boarding club or rent a

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room in their house we would patronize them if we had to sell our banjos to do it.

The Shi Deltas listened to the story of our adventures with great interest. We were lucky to get there, they said, for new students were frequently grabbed and taken off to inferior boarding houses, where they were literally held prisoners. They thought we had better stay right in the house until the next day, when they would take us down to college and protect us while we registered and took our exams. We agreed with them, and they gave us a big room and made things so pleasant that, honestly, if those two senior girls had come back with the surrey and had asked us to go driving with them we would have wavered between attractions.

After dinner we all went into the big loafing room and smoked our pipes; and one of the Shi Deltas sat down at the piano, and the crowd sang jolly songs about how if you could not be a Shi Delta you had better lie down and let a river run over you. It made the gooseflesh come all over me when they grasped hands and leaned into the harmonies together.

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One of the older men, who was sitting in a corner with us, began telling all about the Shi Delta — how great men had belonged to it in college for hundreds of years or so; and how they had owed their rise to its teachings; and how railroad presidents and steel magnates and senators sent their sons to college to become Shi Deltas — and pined away and would not eat if the Shi Deltas would not have them. He kept on talking in a low, brotherly sort of way, and the fellows kept on singing; and pretty soon I got so crazy to join the club that I was just about to tell him that he could go ahead and take my application when the lights went out and there was a big explosion and a lot of smoke, and somebody yelled Fire!

In a minute the house was full of smoke and a panic was in full bloom. While most of the boys rushed upstairs for their belongings, the rest of us grabbed the piano and waltzed it outside into the mob which had collected. Bugs and I were just going back for the hall clock when a young fellow grabbed us.

“Say, boys,” he whispered, “you’ll have to beat

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it! Don't you know they don't allow Freshmen on the streets the first three nights? No excuse goes! Twenty dollars fine to the college! We'll have to duck through the yard over to a house I know, where they'll take us in. They'll have things all right over here in the morning."

We wanted to stay and see the fire, but twenty dollars looked like lots of money. I never saw such a place for rules anyway! We dodged through the yard very carefully and once or twice I heard some one call our names. But the young fellow, who was just as thoughtful as the rest of them, showed us where to hide; and we got through a hole in the back fence and across the alley without being seen. After we had sneaked through about a dozen yards and across a street, we came to a big, fine house; we were all out of breath and my friend heaved a sigh of relief. So did we. To tell the truth we were getting discouraged. To be buncoed, burned out and chased through a mile of alleys in two hours was more than our nerves were hardened to endure.

There were twenty or more boys sitting round

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in the house, and the way they made us feel at home was wonderful! It almost seemed as if they had been expecting us. They were the Fly Gammas, they said, and we were welcome to stay with them as long as we liked. They let us right into all the fun and we had two or three rough but jolly games; and presently Bugs and I had gotten over being homesick for the Shi Deltas, and did not care whether they ever came after us or not. After a while a couple of the boys got to talking to us about the Fly Gammas, and how at one time any man with a Fly Gamma badge could have walked right into the White House and borrowed a dollar from the president, who was his brother; and how the Fly Gammas at Siwash were so much better than the other crowds that they were ashamed of themselves for it; and how, by being a Fly Gamma, one could easily become president of his freshman class, and had more than an even chance of going to Congress.

It was wonderful to think that an organization so great that only the very swellest men — the pick of the best families all over the land — wore

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its badge should condescend to notice us; and the idea of walking round the United States for the rest of my life with the Fly Gamma badge on my vest, and having senators and governors and magnates and haughty young ladies finger it and exclaim over it and try to cultivate my friendship, had me catching my breath. We forgot all about the Shi Deltas; and we were just teetering up and down on the seat waiting to be asked to join when there was a ring at the door, and a minute later a policeman came in.

"I want Peter E. Simmons and Simon Wilbur for fighting!" he said.

Bugs and I turned three shades lighter than chalk, and you should have heard those boys brace up to the officer. I never heard any one talk so fearlessly to the law as they did. They denounced and threatened, and then they pleaded; but he was firm.

"I'm sorry for you, young men," he said to us; "but you were mixed up in that row at the station this evening and the chief wants to see you. Come along quietly and you'll probably get off easily."

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No, you don't!" he said to several of the boys who were crowding out with us. "This bailing-out business by students doesn't go any more. If you want to help the boys call up the president of the college. Chief says he'll only accept bail from him after this. And you can stay right here — I don't want any procession trailing after me."

I went out of the door so full of horror that I would have traded the rest of life for a nice mossy grave, with a good reputation on the tombstone above it. Here I was, Petey Simmons, pride of his high school and joy of his parents, a criminal on the evening of his first day at college! Why did I ever leave home? Why could not some kindly fate transform me into a little yellow dog so that I might live happily and contentedly in a woodshed for a few brief years and then pass on into peaceful oblivion?

Bugs took it harder, if anything. He was better than I was anyway. He went to Sunday-school regularly at home. He broke down and blubbered; and he pleaded with the officer and told him how young and tender we were. We were innocent of

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all crime and asked only to be allowed to walk back to our happy childhood home, never to leave it again. But the officer would not budge. Then Bugs did something I would have given all my prospects in life to do. As we passed an alley he made a wild dash for liberty.

"Stop or I'll fire!" yelled the officer. But Buggs did not even slow down to a hundred miles an hour. Never in my life did I see a human form fade into the horizon so quickly. Even the officer was amazed. "Damn!" he said eloquently after he remembered how to talk. "If I'd known I was arresting a human jackrabbit I'd have put the cuffs on him! Anyway I've got you and don't you dare try this leg business. Come along!"

I tried my best to die; but, beyond getting dumb and kind of mummified, I could not accomplish anything. We went on — one, two, three blocks — toward doom. Then as we passed a corner four boys surrounded us in a businesslike way.

"Who have you got, policeman?" one of them asked.

"Got a Freshman," said the officer. "He was

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fighting this afternoon. It will be thirty days for him. Move on, you fellows!"

"Rats!" said one of the strangers. "Do you mean to tell me that this town is going to arrest a Freshman for fighting and send him to the Works for thirty days?"

"That's what I said!" said the officer. "And what is it to you?"

"Oh, nothing," said the biggest of the four; "only we are college men, and before we see a comrade of ours arrested we'll die fighting."

"Get out of the way!" said the officer, drawing his club.

"Never!" shouted a smaller boy, dramatically throwing himself in front of the club. "Club me if you will and take me to jail; but I'll not see this outrage done! Who were the cowards who let you take this man?"

I was vibrating between hope and despair, to say nothing of admiration. If there were ever heroes on this mean old earth these young men were. Think of it! To risk their very lives for me, a stranger! I tried to tell them to go on and

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leave me to my fate, but I just could not. I did not want them to go. But the policeman was evidently impressed. He scratched his head a minute.

"If you're so fond of this young villain maybe one of you would like to go down to the cooler in his place," he said grimly. "I'll parole him to you if one of you goes with me, and he can come down in the morning."

"I'll go!" "I'll go!" "No! let me go!" "I tell you I'm the oldest!"

For a minute there was almost a row, but the question was finally settled. The policeman clutched a noble-looking youth by the shoulder and he waved his hand gayly at us as he was led to his doom. I sat down on the curb and cried loudly with relief. The biggest of the three put his arm across my shoulders.

"Don't you care, old man!" he said cheerfully. "It's all in a college lifetime. We'll get you off in no time tomorrow morning. Just you come on over to the house and spend the night with us, and we'll see that you get through all right."

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I wobbled up the street with them, weak as a sick kitten, but bursting with gratitude and admiration. Never had I suspected that the world held such splendid men! In a few blocks we reached a house, if anything a little bigger than the others I had visited. I shivered a little — these houses had been mighty unlucky for me; but when I got inside, and the men there learned of the outrage that had been perpetrated, they could not have been more sympathetic if they had been women. They boiled with indignation. They would like, they said, to see an officer get into that house and take a freshman out of it! It just couldn't be done; they'd wad the house up round him and set fire to it first!

For half an hour they seethed; they talked anarchy; they even threatened to burn the station house. I had to plead with them before they would consent to be calm. But pretty soon they cooled off, and I found them to be such delightful companions that I forgot girls and everything else. They insisted on calling me Petey. They sang songs for me — wonderful, rollicking songs — and

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made me join in. They found I could annoy the banjo and three of them got me to join in an extempore quartet. In an hour there was nothing in the world for me but the Eta Bitu Pies, that was what they were.

The Eta Bitu Pies were the oldest of all college fraternities — the largest, best-balanced, most carefully chosen and most brotherly. They literally yearned for chances to die for each other. Blood relationship was thin beside their bonds. One or two of them told me all this as I went up to bed, and then they sat on my bed and turned the lights down and told me, in husky voices, how they had fallen in love with me and wanted me to be one of them for always — never to part! And I said, “Yes” — low and gulpy, like a girl who is getting engaged.

Then they pinned some ribbons on me and gave a weird, terrific yell; and the next minute twenty men were in my room shaking hands and whooping until you could hear them ten city blocks away. And I hope to be marooned in a way station between trains for the rest of my life if the loudest

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of them all was not the greasy villain who tried to bunco me on the train!

"Where did you go this afternoon?" he asked me reproachfully after the noise thinned out. "We've had the devil's own time trying to find you."

"Aren't you a confidence man?" I stuttered. Then I sat down and blushed clear down to my feet, which were bare; I being in pajamas.

"Oh, I see!" said Andrews sadly. "They worked that old gag again. Well, never mind; we got even with them."

"With whom?" I asked.

"The Felta Kaps!" he said in hissing tones. "I saw you with one of them when you left the train — and didn't I muss him up though! But you slipped away."

"Oh," said I, "then it was he who was the bunco man! But he didn't get me — I went away with Briggs."

"With whom?" said Andrews in a loud shriek.

"Briggs," says I.

"Oh, joy and apple sauce!" yelled Andrews,

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rolling on the bed. "So that's the way the Fly Gammas got you, was it?" And he howled.

"But I went to the Shi Delta House after all," I said. "A couple of girls took me there."

"How?" demanded a dozen voices. I told them how. I also revealed the names of the girls.

"Take them off the party list!" said Andrews to another man.

"But what I want to know," said I firmly, "is, did the Shi Delta House burn up?"

Then I had to tell what happened and there was more joy.

"The Fly Gammas must have used a smoke bomb," said Andrews abstractedly. "Darned good scheme too! But it's all right now," he said to me happily. "You're in the crowd you're made for and all your troubles are over; and when we parade you tomorrow morning the hounds will fall dead in heaps."

At this moment I began to sink rapidly in my spirits.

"But shall I have to serve my sentence?" I asked anxiously.

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"Oh, darn!" said Andrews. Then he stopped and sat with his head in his hands for a minute.

"Of course not," said one boy. "One of our old alumni borrowed a policeman's uniform and put on that stunt for us."

Then four or five of the larger boys took that boy and treated him most brutally, exclaiming that sophomores ought to be kept in cages and not allowed at large. As for me I suddenly began to see a great and glaring light. There had been no bunco man. There had been no fire. The police were not aware of my existence. I had been deceived once, abducted three times, once by girls, and finally arrested by an imitation policeman and scared into making an infantile exhibition of myself—all in the interests of rival fraternities. We had been stolen from the Eta Beta Pies by the Felta Kaps, and from the Felta Kaps by the Fly Gams; and then the Shi Deltas had nabbed us and the Fly Gams had stolen us back; and here I was in the Eta Beta Pie House, with a ruined nervous system, while Bugs was probably dead in some

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alley — butchered, so to speak, to make a Grecian holiday!

After I had reflected on this for about two minutes I put on my hat and started home; but I never got farther than the door. I was a child in the hands of those fascinating young demons. Why, they actually made me believe that they had been doing it all for love of us!

When I had gotten over my mad they put me to bed and started to hunt Bugs, who had gummed up the whole plan by bolting. They found him two days later — at home. He had walked ten miles to the next station on the railroad and had gotten home in time for breakfast, worn off about to the ankles. He was a loyal friend, Bugs was; and in all his terror he did not forget me. While he was waiting for the train he sent my father the following telegram:

“Peter in jail for fighting. Penitentiary!
Awful time! Help quick! WILBUR.”

I met father and mother on the street the next afternoon, and mother fainted when she saw me.

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They had come down to rescue me; and the police had denied all knowledge of the affair, which was evidence that I was being railroaded to prison.

There! The whole story is off my chest at last. I am proud of it. They say I averaged more innocence and unsuspecting gullibility to the ounce than any freshman who ever entered Siwash. But I'm tired of being a criminal; and if the home folks do not whitewash my reputation after they read this I will stop saving up for the public library I hope to give them when I am old and fat and inexcusably rich.

II

SAVING A BROTHER

I see another young man in this town has gone to the reform school for stealing the brass journals off a fast mail train. This reminds me for the hundredth time that college life is just human life inside out. Take that boy for instance: He steals a few dollars' worth of brass from a train and goes to the reform school. If he had done it in college he would have gotten a medal, not for getting the brass but for figuring out how to do it.

Somehow ever since I left Siwash I have been deeply interested in the criminal news. I don't mean the real murder and arson and thug stuff, but the little playfulnesses like housebreaking and borrowing woodsheds and heaving bricks through windows. I have a brotherly feeling for the boys who are arrested while trying to steal a bridge or

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a steam roller or who go to probation court because they simply can't stop tearing up cement walks after midnight. I've done it all myself — in college. Of course it doesn't count in college any more than robbery does in finance. I'm mighty glad it doesn't. I wonder how many years I should have to serve if all my college record were dug out and put up to the grand jury! Makes me shiver to think of it. Why, in one night — when I was a freshman too — I was a whole mob of criminals all by myself, with what help Allie Bangs could give me. I infested the town and created a reign of terror. That's what the papers said. Did it myself, and me only seventeen, with light hair and blue eyes.

It all happened the night after I was initiated into Eta Beta Pie. That was a wonderful event for me. I had been wading through perdition for a week to reach it. I had obeyed the most frivolous whims of my brothers. I had been worse than a slave, for slaves only work, while I had also entertained. I had stopped sifting ashes at daybreak to grease the weather-vane on top of the house; I

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had hurried down from the roof to peel potatoes for breakfast, and had stood in the dining-room doorway afterward to catch eggshells as the members tossed them at me — getting a glass of water in the face for each error. I had gone out in the cold and lain down on the street-car track to detain the car until a senior could finish his coffee and climb aboard. I had gone to class in boy's clothes and had dusted the snow from the chapel steps with a whisk broom in front of Saunders, our president. I had footed it three miles to the lake in the afternoon to see if the ice was thick enough to skate on, and had been sent back to bring a sample of the ice to prove my statements. I had cleaned washbowls and windows, and had been punished for abandoning the job to run down to the college and bring back a foot-track in the snow made by some sophomore's divinity. I had gone to Browning Hall evenings with half a dozen of my masters and had stood in the corridor all evening holding their hats and coats and listening to the giggles of the young ladies who passed — and something over a thousand of them passed every few minutes.

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I had done all this and a lot more with a patience that would have made Job welcome a crop of boils as a diversion to make him forget his real troubles. And then one night I was taken to some lonely place in the country, where a freshman might be dismembered and the deed not noticed for years, and there I was welcomed by my loving brothers into their ranks as the hungry threshing machine welcomes the sheaf of oats. When they had mangled me beyond repair they stood me up and said some wonderful words. I don't remember what they were, but it seemed to me that they put my fragments together again and made a man of me. And presently I wasn't a shivering piece of human junk any more, but a brand-new brother with my ears full of noble sentiments and my hot young soul panting for a chance to go forth and defy all America and Asia, if necessary, in defense of some young scoundrel who had been spanking me with a barrel stave an hour before.

I wore my new pin on my pajama jacket that night. When I awoke I looked at it a long time and held it tightly while I bathed, and put it on

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my undershirt until I got my trousers on, and then pinned it on my shirt until I got my vest on. Then I put it on the lower inside left-hand corner of my vest close to the buttons, and propelled it down to chapel, feeling like a man who was wearing a searchlight. Other frat men came up and congratulated me and I blushed and stammered. Girls looked at it and exclaimed over its beauty. I soaked and luxuriated in happiness with just one flaw: Here I had been a full-fledged Eta Beta Pie for eight hours, and as yet I had done no deed to save a brother sorrow and had fought no battle for one who wore the pin.

The thought gnawed at me until by chapel-time I was really unhappy. Here I was a worthless freshman, honored by a great aggregation of brothers, and after all they had done for me I had done nothing in return. Moreover I couldn't think of anything noble or brotherly to do. So when Brother Sam Byers fell into step with me and confessed that he had a calculus test the next morning, and that calculus was to him a sealed book, I leaped at the chance. I would save Sam.

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I told him so. He declined the favor. "Don't bother," said he; "I've flunked before and I'll survive it."

That made me tired and I told him so. He was no sort of man to deny a brother a little pleasure. He finally consented to be saved and asked what I was going to do. I told him I didn't know; that I would save him as soon as I worked out a good plan. He told me to go ahead and amuse myself, and I left him feeling as proud and happy as if I had just been commissioned to take a chair leg and go over and stop this Mexican revolution business.

I also felt about as uncertain as I should have felt under the other circumstances. I had volunteered to save a junior from a flunk. It was considerable of a job for a freshman, and a freshman all cobbled up with court plaster at that. I couldn't take the exam., myself. I couldn't drill a hole into Byers' head and let calculus into him. I should have to suspend class in some manner. It didn't take me two minutes to come to this conclusion.

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When I had reached it I shivered a little at the prospects. I had done a lot of primary — you might say kindergarten — deviltry around college, but I had never suspended classes or interfered with the operations of college. This was a really high-class job, worthy of a past-master in crime, and I didn't have the slightest idea how to go about it.

I was depressed. Here was my first chance to make a brother glad and I should probably end up by messing things more than ever.

Just then I noticed that Allie Bangs wasn't looking very cheerful either. Allie had been initiated the night before with me and was probably uncomfortable in as many places as I was. But it went to my heart to think that he also might be worrying because he had no chance to save a brother. And here I was, hugging a saving job to my selfish bosom. It wasn't right. I would divide the chance with Allie, so I got him to bum chapel and told him all about it.

Allie was a splendid boy, with imagination and nerve. He was wonderfully pleased at the chance

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and went right to work with me to figure out how it could be done.

“There are only two really good ways,” said Allie. “We’ve got to shut down the coll. for the day or prevent Professor Wogg from hearing the class. Personally, I think the last is the more artistic. To shut up the whole school would be wasteful. We’d better call off the professor.”

That was all very well, but it took us an hour to get even the start of an idea. We finally agreed that the only practical plan would be to get the professor to class late. There was an unwritten rule in Siwash by which a class never waited for a professor more than five minutes. Five minutes past the hour was the deadline, and some of the most intensely exciting moments in my life have been those where the minute hand was just going over the four-thirty mark with a scout shouting that the professor was now well inside the yard and advancing on the run. More than once we’ve met the professor coming up the stairs as we came down, but we continued to come down. Artillery couldn’t have stopped us.

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When we decided on this plan Allie and I took deep breaths and looked at each other. Then we shook hands solemnly and gave each other the grip. In another day we might be hunted criminals; but it would all be for a brother.

Professor Wogg, who chivied the Siwash students through mathematics, was a middle-aged man with a mind which never came down below logarithms and which was usually absent admiring Euclid when it was needed in everyday emergencies. He lived in the north part of town with his deaf old mother, and as we canvassed over the situation it didn't seem so desperate. He was a very methodical man. Each morning at precisely a quarter to eight he appeared on the campus and proceeded to his classroom, which he inhabited, with an interval for chapel, until noon, with his fat old silver watch laid out in front of him on his desk. To be sure, the watch didn't do him very much good, for we always had to remind him that it was time to abandon mathematics for the day by such gentle means as tipping over the chairs or leaving the room in a body. But that watch was

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our chance this time. We would dispose of it by fair means or foul and then we would get into his house that night and set his clock back half an hour. With his usual regularity and inflexible accuracy, assisted greatly by his calm inattention to earthly affairs, Professor Wogg would arrive for his calculus test the next morning just twenty-five minutes after the class had evaporated.

It was such a simple little plan that we hugged ourselves for joy. But we had to work quickly. We had skipped our own trig. class. Inside of five minutes Professor Wogg's last class for the day would be dismissed and our last chance to capture the watch would be gone. We rushed over to his room. As the class passed out we leaped in and began eagerly to question the professor about one of the 1879 knotty problems in trigonometry which were making our young lives a howling desert just then.

The good old man, while a little astonished at our sudden interest, took the bait beautifully. He went to the blackboard to put up the problem. Suddenly there was a crash.

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"Oh, goodness!" said Allie, horrified. "I've smashed your watch, Professor Wogg! This is really awful!"

Professor Wogg reached the desk in two steps. He was agitated. Allie held up the ponderous old turnip. Its thick crystal was broken and it was a dejected-looking affair.

"I was reaching for a book and swept it off," he said abjectly. "I'm awfully sorry."

"It was my grandfather's," moaned the professor, looking at it helplessly.

"I'm going to take it right down and have it fixed this minute," said Allie.

"Oh, no," said the professor politely. "I'll take it down at noon."

"No, you won't," said Allie fiercely. "I've been a clumsy idiot and I'll not allow you to inconvenience yourself. I'll take it down and stay right with it and then bring it up to you."

He took it from the professor's hands and we went away apologizing, through the corridor and down the stairs.

"Fine, so far," whispered Allie as he dropped

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the watch into his pocket. "Now for the house. What do you know about housebreaking?"

I knew precious little technically, but this didn't seem to be much of a job. Like most of the professors, Wogg had a college student who lived with him and mowed the lawn and fed the cow and kept the fires in winter for his board. We knew the boy. He was in our class. We knew this was the meeting night for his literary society and that even if he came straight home without waiting to fight with members of the rival society he would not arrive before half-past ten. Nine o'clock was the professor's bedtime. It was in the college statistics. Not even presidential elections or fires in the next block kept him up.

Nothing could have been more neatly arranged. Front doors in Jonesville were seldom locked. Student roomers roamed in and out at all times of the night and visited with each other without the formality of bothering the family. We would go up to the professor's house at ten o'clock and one of us would walk boldly in and up to Mangler's room. Then while the other man waylaid

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Mangler and persuaded him that his watch was fast the criminal would go through the house and turn back the clock. Even if Professor Wogg did hear him he would think nothing of it. Very few students who made their homes in private families neglected to go out to the kitchen at night to make sure that no piece of pie or cake was pining away and shriveling up from loneliness.

It was all so beautiful that we could hardly wait for night. I was selected as the burglar, and just before ten o'clock I tramped up Professor Wogg's front steps and entered the house. I had done it before to visit Mangler and I knew where his room was. Loudly and confidently I climbed up the stairs. The only thing that worried me was my heart. It was making an awful uproar. If Professor Wogg was awake he might mistake it for a steam pump and come out to investigate. I sat in Mangler's room for a few minutes and then went downstairs.

At the end of the downstairs hall was a tall grandfather's clock whanging away in a dignified manner. I opened its face and turned it back to

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9:25, feeling like a man who was altering the calendar. As the hand passed the six figure the clock had a convulsion and then boomed out the half hour. It sounded like the first gun in the Civil War. I stopped breathing for a minute or two; but no one stirred.

Then from somewhere upstairs a clock struck ten loudly and defiantly. I was thunderstruck. But still no one rose to inquire, so I went upstairs to find that clock. This was risky work and I felt very uneasy. But the moonlight helped me and presently I found that clock in the professor's study and made a liar of it too. Then downstairs another clock cuckooed ten times.

By this time I was indignant. Was Professor Wogg running a home for aged clocks? I went down again and found the offender in the kitchen. Just for revenge I messed up its internals a little. Then, at peace with all the world, I tiptoed toward the front door, and opened it softly. Mangler and Allie Bangs were just coming up the steps.

"Good," said Allie eagerly. "I hoped you'd be here."

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I thought of forty-nine answers and chose one at random. "I'd about given you up," I answered.

We all three went upstairs to Mangler's room. I sat down on the bed while Allie took the rocking chair. I looked at them both a little wildly.

"I haven't told Mangler a word about it," said Allie, acting like a lowbrow and putting the whole job up to me.

"Well," said I taking a long breath, "it's just like this, Mangler." I stopped a long time, ostensibly for effect, but in reality to figure out what it really was like. "How would you like to be treasurer of the Athletic Association?"

That had been my own pet hope for the next year, but I abandoned it without a quiver. Anyway it was a sacrifice for a frat brother and I was proud to pay the price. Mangler stared a minute — he wasn't exactly what you would call prominent in the class. But we went to work and talked to him eagerly for a few minutes and in the end he became enthusiastic. I told him I had been waiting for him in his room for an hour, and Allie

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cussed me for not remembering it was society night and then we rose to go, unutterably relieved.

"You'll think about it, won't you, old man?" said Allie anxiously.

"Yes," said Mangler. "You fellows are mighty good to consider me for the place. Got to go? I'd ask you to sit around a while, but I've got to get up at six." Saying which he reached under the bed and fished out an alarm clock which he proceeded to wind and set with caution.

"I told you my watch was right and you wouldn't believe it," he said triumphantly to Allie. "It's right by this old machine shop anyway."

I looked at Allie desperately. He put his hands in his hair and pulled it thoughtfully for a minute. Suddenly he got up.

"We might as well cinch this thing right here," he said to Mangler. "Graham only lives about six blocks from here. I'll run over and get him, and if he'll support you I think we can put it through."

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"But I'm getting awfully sleepy," said Mangler plaintively.

"It won't take ten minutes," said Allie eagerly, "and you can afford to murder a little sleep just for once, you dormouse!"

He darted out of the door. I hadn't the slightest idea what my cue was, but I stuck tight to Mangler and talked of college affairs and the class and the weather, and was just considering thumping him over the head with his dictionary and escaping with his watch and clock when there was a roar and a clang of bells and Jonesville's prize fire department went past on the dead run.

"Fire!" yelled Mangler, leaping into his shoes. He was fresh from the country and fires had his earnest attention at all times. "Come on!" he shouted as he flashed through the door.

I came, but not until I had tarried a minute with that alarm clock. When I had finished it was harmless, but I never knew alarm clocks were so tough before. I could have broken open a cocoa-nut with less exertion.

I chased Mangler up the street amid the ever-

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growing throng, and when the firemen stopped at a box a few blocks up, looked eagerly over the neighborhood and then began to indulge in highly inflammable language, I began to feel proud of Allie. Somehow I connected the whole thing with him. He joined us a minute after and we all walked back, Mangler disappointed, but we two perfectly happy. We went up to the room again to get my hat and Mangler yawned once more, furiously this time.

"Gee whiz! I've simply got to go to bed," he complained.

"Well, good night," I said hastily. "Sorry we've kept you up so long. See you tomorrow."

"I'll let you out downstairs," said Mangler as we hurried downward. "I'm going to call up the telephone operator and find out just what time it really is."

I sat down on the steps so suddenly that he almost fell over me. "What's the matter?" he complained.

"Hush," I said for want of any better remark.

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"Mangler, I'd forgotten the most important thing I came to see you about."

"Let it go till tomorrow," said Mangler, yawning again. "I'm too sleepy to talk any more."

"But tomorrow will be too late," I hissed, grabbing him by the arm and hauling him back to the room by main force. "If you don't hear this tonight you'll regret it. It's an awful thing."

"What is it?" said Mangler eagerly.

Darned if I knew.

I hemmed and hawed and walked round the room and asked if he could keep a secret, and got his pledge to do it; but I simply couldn't get a line on what it was. Finally I turned to Allie. "You tell him," I said; "it makes me nervous to think of it."

That was getting even with Bangs all right. I couldn't see him in the darkness, but I could feel his glare.

"You see, Mangler," said Allie, beginning very slowly, "it's just this way."

"Yes, yes," said Mangler after a minute.

"The sophs, you know, are still sore about that

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party deal where we hoisted Petey in by the window."

"Yes."

"They've sworn to get even with the class, and they say that you were the one who warned Petey," said Allie; speeding up splendidly.

"But I didn't," said Mangler indignantly.

"So we've told them, but they won't believe it. I've even offered to take the consequences myself," said Allie virtuously; "but they say they are going to get you and cut off your hair and paint your head with iodine before chapel tomorrow morning."

Mangler was no poet and did not appreciate the beautiful symbolism of sophomore vengeance. He got excited.

"How are they going to do it?" he stammered.

"I don't know," said Allie, "but I suppose they'll just come on up to your room and do it here. That's one reason why I walked up with you tonight."

"Hush," I said, getting into the game; "I heard a whistle below."

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We listened nervously. "Allie, come here," I said. We stepped out into the hall. "I'll cut the telephone wires," I whispered hastily.

We came back. "It's all right," said Allie. "Petey has a plan. He'll go down and reconnoiter. We'll stay here and wait for him."

I tiptoed downstairs and went round the house. The telephone wires ran in from the other side. They were too thick to cut; I soon realized that. But I had an old nickel chain attached to my watch — it seemed inevitable that the events of the night should be run by watches — and climbing up a porch pillar I wound it round both wires. Then I started down with triumph surging through me. A voice spoke sharply from the sidewalk.

"Come down out of that and come here," it said.

I jumped the rest of the way and took one look. The voice belonged to a policeman fourteen feet high. It was Red Nelson. I knew him. Thank heaven, I was only a freshman and he didn't know me!

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"Come here, you," he cried again, starting my way.

I did not come. I was small and a good sprinter and suddenly I felt an overwhelming desire to manufacture foot tracks. There was a desperate scarcity of foot tracks just then. The whole world yammered for them. He who made them was a philanthropist. I began the publication of a series of 7½ tracks, and never in history were they turned out faster. At the back of the yard I met a high board fence. With the thunder of hoofs behind me I dove for the top, landed on my stomach, wriggled over and darted down the alley. A revolver shot rang out and something pinged into a telephone pole beside me.

I didn't care. I shouldn't have stopped then to give first aid to a telephone pole if it had been dying. I kept right on making tracks down that alley and putting them farther and farther apart until it seemed to me that I soared between steps. That policeman may have been a good runner, but he had no chance. He had only two legs, and I had two legs and the healthiest scare I'd ever

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had besides. I went round a corner into another alley so fast I skidded on the turn, ran through a back yard and down into the street and there, just ahead of me, I saw a street car standing all by itself at the end of the track — that is, it didn't have any crew and there was no one in it but an old lady.

I never was partial to Jonesville's trolley cars. They ran so slowly that only the leisure class had time to ride on them. But that car looked as welcome as a celestial chariot. I wanted to go downtown in a great hurry and I believed that if I got into that car and treated it fairly, and didn't stop it at every corner to wait while some Jonesville young man said good-by to his girl on a near-by porch, I could win its love and get good service out of it.

I jumped into the vestibule and turned on the power. My policeman wasn't in sight yet, but as the car started its crew came out of a saloon on the corner. I wasn't doing a thing but saving them the trouble of coaxing the old ark back to town, but you never saw any one so mad about it.

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They chased me for a block, but it was no use. I turned the controller clear round and we went down the street over that prehistoric track like an early June cyclone, the car leaping and crashing over the loose joints and the poor old lady yelling at every bump. I was sorry for her, but it couldn't be helped. The car gained speed and presently we were filling that sleepy street so full of noise that you could hear the windows rattling on both sides. I saw lights flashing up in the houses as I passed, but I didn't stop to satisfy any one's curiosity. I was out to break a record and I gave my entire attention to the job.

Near the business section a railroad crossed the street and I could see a red lantern waving frantically. So I began to figure out some way of stopping the car, and after several attempts I succeeded. I don't think it was the right way, because I produced the finest little electrical display round the car you ever saw.

I beat it up a side street and round four corners, and finally landed in an alley back of the Eta Bitá Pie house. I got in the rear door and sat

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downstairs in the dark for a generation or two getting my breath and waiting for Allie Bangs. He didn't come in for a long time and he was a sight when he arrived. His clothes were dirty and torn, but he was quite cheerful.

"Everything's O. K.," he whispered happily, "but I've worked like a dog to fix it up. Why didn't you come back?"

That magnified all my troubles and I told him hissing.

"Oh, well," he said cheerfully, "that's nothing. You got a good ride out of it. But listen to my deeds: I finally persuaded Mangler that the sophs had got you and then I had to calm him down and put him to bed. After that I left with his watch in my pocket, feeling pretty good, and I hadn't gone more than four doors until I heard a clock begin to strike. It had a bell as big as the great bell at Moscow and by the time it had struck twelve the whole ward was echoing. It made me mighty mad I can tell you. There are too many pesky clocks in this world anyway. They are a nuisance. Any one who wasn't stone

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deaf would wake up when that clock struck. It was the grammar-school clock and the villains who made it had it hid up in the tower. I had to get up and doctor it, and maybe it wasn't a sweet job. I went in through the coal hole and over two transoms, and even after I got into the belfry, which wasn't so feverish up there in the wind, let me tell you I had my troubles. I'm no jeweler you know, and I couldn't decide what to do with that clock. But I unhooked a few weights and things and messed round with the wheels and was turning a lever when the blamed thing began to strike again. I shinned out of that building as fast as I could and came over here. It was still striking when I came in. I guess it's struck about three hundred by this time."

After that we went to bed; but I didn't sleep much, thinking of what had happened and what might happen. It had been a mighty hard night and discouraging in many ways, but at any rate we had served a brother, and the thought of his pleased face as he leaped from the class room at exactly 8:05 the next morning was a lot of com-

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fort. We went down to college to see the fun.

We got there just at eight o'clock, and I must confess I was as nervous as a bridegroom during the next five minutes. What if our plans had gone wrong after all and Professor Wogg should get in under the wire? What if there should be more clocks in the house, or if that chump Mangler should make a nuisance of himself in some new way and spoil it all? But Professor Wogg didn't come.

The class didn't come either. We waited five minutes more and then went upstairs full of painful thoughts. The class room was empty. It was completely and infernally empty. In fact the door was locked.

We went downtown and walked round to cool ourselves off. We'd saved Byers evidently, but how had we managed to overdo the job so? We hadn't stopped all the clocks in Jonesville. We were still struggling with the problem when chapel time came, and when we found Byers on his way in we drew him aside firmly, by the neck, and asked him why he didn't come to class.

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"Why, didn't you hear Professor Wogg announce in chapel yesterday that he was going to Chicago today to meet his old mother?" asked Byers in surprise. "He hasn't any classes today."

Then we both kicked Byers frantically and demanded of him why he hadn't told us. But he couldn't see why he should have done so, even after we informed him that he had been saved by our herculean efforts. He insisted on viewing it all as a joke. In fact he didn't believe anything we said and we were afraid to prove it. Saving dough-headed brothers who don't care a hang whether they are saved or not is discouraging work.

The only comfort we got out of the whole affair was from the evening paper which, for once, reeked with news. The city was full of thugs and desperadoes, it declared. An attempt had been made to burglarize Professor Wogg's home. The fire department had been called out by hoodlums. Some one had stolen a street car from mere malice and had burned out its motors and stalled the whole Eighth Street line. The clock of the North

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Side Grammar School had gone insane and had struck 678 times, being quieted finally on demand of the frantic neighborhood by an ax in the hands of the janitor.

All of which was quite a little excitement for two freshmen to accomplish all by their lonely selves. We deserved the thanks of the city editor, but we never went round to collect them.

III

FORMALITY AT SIWASH

When I had been in Siwash College a few weeks, and had gotten so sophisticated that it was hardly worth while for a junior to attempt to sell me obsolete textbooks and season tickets to chapel any more, a terrible thing happened. The freshman class decided to give a formal party.

This formal-party business was a vice at Siwash. It afflicted all classes and did not spare the young, the old, the good, the beautiful, or the ruinous old pluggers who were gumming up their middle-aged intellects with Greek and Latin. Every one was supposed to attend these parties. It was a point of honor. And every year the freshman class in its eagerness to get acquainted amused the college by giving a formal party, which was the great event of the year for the sophomores. They all

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attended — that is, they did not entirely attend; I mean they did not always get inside the hall. But they entered into the affair with great enthusiasm and did their best to make the occasion interesting.

If a sophomore could sneak into the orchestra loft during the intermission of a freshman party and pour syrup into the instruments, he felt entitled to loaf along through the rest of his college career on this glorious record. I know one sophomore who got into a hall before a freshman party and waxed the floor with powdered resin. It inflated him so that he disdained to attend classes after that; and when the Faculty expelled him he was too proud to explain. He could have told them in a few words and they would have seen that he was a great man and would have apologized. But he did not. He was just that proud!

I do not know what there is in a freshman party that puts frenzy into a sophomore's blood. The desire of a New York woman to get far enough inside of a Vanderbilt home to get thrown out again is mild beside the determination of a sopho-

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more to insert himself into a freshman party and act like a bear in a bee-tree. I know, because I was a sophomore once, too, and I lay in the cold for twenty-four hours in an attic above Carr's Hall waiting for the freshmen to coagulate, with my arms full of bologna sausages and Roman candles. I ate the sausages and broke up the party with the Roman candles by firing at the receiving line through the trapdoor in the ceiling. When my turn to die comes I shall think of that night and laugh. I have lived!

It was not because of the sophs, however, that our first party was so terrible to me. It was because of the weird way in which it was pulled off. After an eager young society fighter in our class had proposed the party and everybody had clapped their hands and voted for it, they moved to proceed after the ancient Siwash custom. In other words, we put the names of the whole class in two hats, men in one and women in another, and drew partners for the party. And after the meeting was over I awoke to the fact that I, Petey Simmons, who had been too busy to get wise upon any

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social rules, was expected to take a perfectly strange young lady to that party and see that she had a lovely time.

When I thought of all that I went back to my room and washed my head in cold water a while, until my ears cooled off. To tell the truth, in spite of the fact that I'd had seventeen years in which to do it I had never studied this girl question very hard. Of course in our town I knew every one, and when we were seniors in the high school I got so that I could call for a girl and steer her down the sidewalk to a class social without bumping her into a freight train on the main street crossing; but I had never looked up the fine points of the game. I had never even talked to a strange girl and asked her if I might get her a chair so that she could sit down while I escaped.

Strange girls had always scared me. Of course they did not know it. I'd have let them eat me shred by shred first; but, somehow, whenever I was introduced to some young lady who might reasonably expect to be entertained with a flow of wit, I always began to wonder if I was as big a

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fool as she had a perfect right to suspect — and when you're wondering that, you are not going to ignite any one with your conversation. I was all right at that time with any girl whom I had known for fourteen or fifteen years, and who I knew would not bite. But as for marching up to a chilly young princess and asking the privilege of making her happy for a whole evening — every time I thought of it things began to go black before me. The only comfort I had was the thought that perhaps the chapter house might burn before that night and that I might die a hero while trying to rescue the cook, and thus get out of the whole affair.

The more I thought over the thing, the worse it looked. That party loomed up just like a wisdom tooth that had to be pulled on a certain date, rain or shine. The worst of it was I was ashamed to admit it to any one. Before I would have let any one know that I was worried about opening up a social function with a strange girl, I would have escorted a whole female seminary to prayer meeting. So I kept my troubles to myself and

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worried along and dreamed of trying to melt a cold, distant glare with a lot of high class and irresistible conversation, such as: "It seems very cool this evening." "Yes." "No." "How do you enjoy Siwash?" "Excuse me, but if I take off my shoe I think I can get it untangled from your dress more quickly." That last was my pet dream and it burned me up.

I was going across the campus one afternoon on my way home, feeling unusually unattractive, the party being only a week away, when I met Mark Smith of our class. Mark came from my town, but we did not see a great deal of each other, because I was a butterfly of fashion and lived at the Eta Beta Pie house, while Mark lived in the north end of town in a room which he got for milking the family cow; and he boarded himself in the room, having something like fifty dollars to get through on that year. But we were good friends and always had been, and this time I was unusually glad to see him. I felt somehow as if we had some common secret. We had not talked more than five minutes before a sort of sadness fell over both of

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us, and Mark asked which girl I was going to take to the class party.

"Miss Allshine. Know her?" I said eagerly. "I can't find any one who does."

"She's in my chem. class," said Mark. "She's a tall, fierce-looking girl, who looks as if she was daring any one to speak to her."

I sighed. I was going to take the dare, but I did not want to.

"I've got to take Miss Willoughby," said Mark gloomily.

"Whoop!" said I. "You've drawn a double star. She's the classiest girl in the bunch."

"Want to trade?" said Mark almost passionately.

"Against the rules," I said. "I know her, though, and I'll take you over to the hall and introduce you."

"Say," said Mark in an agonized tone, "I don't have to go until that night — do I?"

"Here," said I, "is a man who has drawn the prettiest girl in the class, and you'd think he was going to do a job of lion taming!"

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"Petey," said Mark, "if I could get out of going to this party by breaking a leg I'd do it! When I think of going over to the hall and asking that sweet girl to be mine for four hours and a half, me knowing as little about society as Washington did about automobiles, I get cold chills all over me."

No one was near. So I confessed.

"Old man," said I, "when I think of plunging into the mad revelry with a stern and only moderately young lady whom I've never seen before, I wonder why death is so darned dilatory. I'm afraid it's going to loaf round and leave me on earth until after that party."

"What! Are you scared too?" said Smith, his eyes wide open.

"I'm not what you call scared," I said. "I'm merely paralyzed. What do you talk about when you lug perfect strangers round to parties?"

"Ug-h-h-h!" said Mark by way of reply.

"I'll tell you," says I. "We've got to go in together on this, old man. We've got to brace each other up. It's a crisis and we've got to meet it

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like men. We've got to figure the thing out. If I come over to your room tonight, can we plan out just what we're going to do and say?"

Mark took off his hat and mopped his forehead.

"Say, Petey," he said with a regular sunrise of relief on his face, "you're a brick! If you'll do that maybe we can get through with it. It's worried me half to death. Honest, I don't know that girl's language even. I don't know whether to grab her by the arm or let her steer herself. I don't know — oh, Lord, I don't know anything about it!"

"We've got to be formal," I said decisively. "It's the only way. If we try fancy tricks we'll mess things up sure. Now here's the job: We've got to meet those girls at the dormitory, take them to the hall, and talk to them politely and pleasantly all the way. When we get there others will help and we can get some relief. How many words do you suppose it will take to go nine blocks, allowing five minutes to get started?"

Smith scratch his head dubiously.

"Let's experiment," he said. "We'll walk a

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block. You talk, I'll count." And off we went.

"I-hope-this-will-be-a-pleasant-party, Miss All-shine," I said slowly, fighting for time. "We-freshmen-ought-to-set-a-good-record. It's-our-first-party, you-know, and — and — and ——— How many's that?" I said irritably.

"Twenty-five," said Smith; "but you can't run a girl down the street, you know! I think we ought to allow at least a hundred to the block. Maybe the girls will say something too."

"I hope they won't!" said I fervently. "If we get our conversation all lined up, and then the girls butt in and switch it off, we'll be in a nice fix! We've just got to write it out and take no chances."

That was what we did. We wrote polite notes and got the girls' acceptances. We figured that would be better than dividing the agony into two calls. Then I went up to Smith's room and there we planned the campaign. We did not leave a single thing to chance. We wrote the whole thing out with parentheses, such as: (Put on hat here); (Take outside of walk here); (Comment on

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weather here); (Help over crossing). Then we rehearsed. First I was Miss Willoughby and then Mark was Miss Allshine.

We had signal practice too. When I coughed it would be a sign that I had forgotten my lines. Then Mark was to wade in and hold up the conversation — if he could — until I could slip out my cuff and find the next subhead. We even had dress rehearsal so far as we could, and we went over the ground twice from the Seminary to the hall where the party was to be held in brilliant style — not a single slip. By the day of the party I was tolerably certain that, unless the girls insisted on talking themselves and breaking up our attack, we were going through the evening with a perfect score. I was relieved beyond words and so was Mark.

On the morning of the fatal day I woke to find the rain beating on the window. This was very bad. It meant a carriage. We had not figured on a carriage and we had to tear our lines to pieces that afternoon to get it into the conversation. Besides, Mark was not by any means flush; and when

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he thought of spending more for twenty minutes of four-wheeled luxury than he did for one or two weeks' nourishment, he showed alarming signs of getting too ill to go to the party. I had to rush out and hire an old street hack, which made the depot, before he would recover.

The freshman class was full of despairing young men that afternoon, for at Siwash the worst calamity, next to a football defeat, was a wet, muddy night for a class party. We had an antipathy to carriages that was almost venomous. I knew a sophomore who had to take a girl who lived in the city, and who went all over the road carefully after supper and not only picked out the driest crossings but dropped a plank in a critical place in order to avoid forking over the price of four football tickets to the carriage trust.

It was with great triumph, therefore, that I closed a bargain with old Jimmy Bates, the depot hackman, for one dollar flat, both ways; by supper time we had worked up incidental words and music for the job of loading and unloading the young ladies, and felt much better.

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I was giving my first dress suit a tryout that night, and I dressed early, with a rule book before me. Then I hurried over to Mark's and looked him over. He had no dress suit, but otherwise he was severely and almost alarmingly formal. We ran over our lines until the hack drove up and we left, nervous but heeled.

It had been getting colder all day; and, though it was still raining, the world was a sheet of ice. We struggled up the twenty steps leading to the front door of Browning Hall against a heavy wind, and the job was so exciting that we stuck another line into our parts. "When we come out, Mark," I whispered as we waited in the parlor, "say this: 'Be very careful please, Miss Willoughby, as we go down. The steps are very slippery.'"

Just then Miss Allshine arrived in billows of party clothes and I jumped up and plunged into my lines, Mark grinning nervously whenever I lost my footing and clawed for the next word.

It was not so awful after all. Miss Allshine was severe to look at, but she was friendly and really she seemed about as rattled as I was. She helped

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me out when I staggered, with a word or two herself, and we steered for the door right on schedule time; in fact, I had to hurry up the remark about the large freshman class in order to work in the one about the steps. But I got in all right. "Be very careful on the steps, Miss Allshine," I said anxiously as I took her arm and got a grip on the umbrella; "it's very slippery tonight."

I blame Mark for what happened. He insisted that we should take the inside going down the steps so that the young ladies could clutch the rail if necessary. He had read that somewhere and hung to it like a leech. So I took the inside, away from the rail; and as soon as I had finished my little speech Miss Allshine, who was 101 per cent woman, sailed blithely out, with great confidence in Providence, struck the first step and — I hate to tell it — fell down. It hurts me to think of it now. I held on for dear life, but I had no chance. I had nothing to hang on to but Miss Allshine, and she was a pretty large girl anyway and determined in her actions. So I sat down too. And, the steps being very steep and excessively icy, we just

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coasted down swiftly and bumpily until we hit the bottom. By that time we had acquired considerable momentum, so we kept right on across the walk and down to the large stone horseblock, where we stopped with our four feet against it. The umbrella and my hat arrived a second later.

I prayed for death in any form, but nothing happened; so I picked Miss Allshine up, brushed her off, apologized extempore with all my might, and begged her not to cry, which she showed signs of doing. I was burning up with mortification and I would have given everything I owned to be back in the woods somewhere, treed by a bear. It would have been pleasant beside that mess. I had just gotten into the carriage after making an awful hash of my lines, when the door of the Seminary opened and I heard Mark say, as he switched round to the inside and grabbed his girl by the arm: "Please be very careful, Miss Willoughby," and so on. And then Miss Willoughby tripped blithely forward like a fairy who has wings.

There was a little scream and a lot of bumps;

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and when I opened my eyes again Mark and Miss Willoughby were just sailing up to the horseblock, right side up but wild-eyed. And all of a sudden the whole thing seemed perfectly delightful to me and I took off my opera hat.

“Good evening, people!” I said.

Then we all four laughed, and I got out and helped them up and we all made merry; and Mark and I forgot our lines and did not care, because we did not need them. I have broken the ice socially in a good many ways, but never but once by sliding downstairs on it. It is a strenuous method — but mighty effective — of getting acquainted in a hurry.

Up to this minute I had not thought a thing about the sophomores. This was strange because I hated them so. At that time a sophomore was to me a cross between a hyena and a grasshopper suffering from softening of the brain. They were the greatest pest in college. They had persecuted us freshmen beyond endurance by walking round and looking wise, and we had asserted ourselves

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like men by yelling scornfully at them whenever three or four of us were gathered together. We had not come to blows because the Faculty had made a Hague commission out of itself the year before and had expelled about a dozen freshmen and sophomores for damaging the shrubbery with each other. But we had the same natural affection for each other as cats have for dogs, and if I had had anything under my hat worth covering I should have realized that this party was likely to be infested with sophomores. But I did not think a thing about it, being worried with my own troubles, until we were two blocks from the hall—when Adams, a freshman, jumped out from behind a corner and waylaid our old ark.

“Stop!” he whispered excitedly. “The whole street is packed with sophomores. They’re after you, Petey. They’re going to capture you and cut your hair into fancy designs before they let you come to the party. You’ve got to skip out of here quick.”

“How terrible!” exclaimed the girls, turning pale.

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Freshman parties were more of an adventure than they had counted on.

"I'll take the girls," said Adams quickly. "They'll let us in."

"Bully for you!" I said so heartily that both young ladies looked at me suspiciously.

"Perkins and the other fellows say you are to go round through the alley, get up on the low woodshed you'll see there, and then climb up on the roof of the house next to the hall. We're going to let down a ladder and get you there. After you are in you can show yourself at the window and we'll give the mob the guying of their lives!"

"Excuse me, ladies, while I do a little pussy-cat work on the ridgepoles," said I with a low bow.

Then I gave my opera hat to Adams for safe-keeping, and Mark and I ducked up a side street. We found the woodshed and I got up on Mark's shoulders and got on the rear part of the residence; then I hoisted myself over the eaves and hitched cautiously up to the ridgepole.

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Twenty-five feet above was an open window, with thousands of cubic feet of light and music and merry conversation pouring out. I whistled and somebody stuck his head out of the window. As he did so there was a wild shout from below and more than forty sophomores poured into the alley, hauled Mark down by one leg and began swarming up the woodshed.

“Hurry up with that ladder!” I yelled.

There was a commotion above, and the end of a ladder advanced out of the window. The sophomores below saw it and yelled fiendishly. Five — ten — fifteen feet of ladder appeared. Then it hesitated. With horror I saw that the supply was running out. Two foot-ball candidates lowered it as far as they could and besought me to jump up the intervening ten feet and catch it; but I declined. The first soph was on the kitchen of the house. There was no time to lose. Within a few feet of me was a chimney. It was an old chimney anyway. I tore half a dozen bricks off the top and heaved one down at the sophomore. It missed him by an inch.

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"Another foot," I yelled boldly, "and I'll feed you bricks till you choke on them!"

The sophomore hesitated. I let him have another brick. It lit with a soft plunk on his leg and he got down and went away at the top of his voice. Then those sophomores sat down round the building and looked up at me hungrily and eagerly, like so many wolves waiting for dinner.

I sat on the ridgepole and drummed my feet on the shingles to keep warm. It was icy on the roof and I was bareheaded and not dressed for arctic work. In five minutes I would have given anything to be inside the hall entertaining Miss Allshine and other strange girls. The window above was crowded with the figures of my classmates. They shouted encouragement to me and varied it with horrid defiances at the enemy.

Up in the hall the orchestra began the program of dances and the party swept on. Adams let a thick overcoat down with a piece of twine and I wrapped up in it and sat on the ridgepole against the chimney. The open window framed a beautiful face. It was Miss Willoughby's.

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"Oh, Mr. Simmons!" she called. "I'm sitting this dance out with you. I'm so sorry we can't dance it. Don't you think the sophomores are beasts?"

I assured her quite fervently that I had nothing against real beasts and disliked to hear them maligned; she laughed and we had a real nice visit. Adams came along with his string and let down her program and I signed it. Beautiful and friendly girls appeared at the window, one after another, and sat out dances with me. It was very pleasant. Somehow I did not mind them at all when they were twenty-five feet above me. I thought up bright remarks without any trouble, and sometimes I had as many as five listening eagerly at the same time. I was quite a social lion.

Reynolds introduced them to me and each one let down her program by a string so I could sign it. I made myself just as much at home on that roof as if I owned it. It was gall and wormwood for the sophomores below, and they champed and gnashed and curdled up the night with threats

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which I did not mind at all, there being a whole lot of the chimney left.

About ten o'clock Miss Allshine let down a basket, with lettuce salad, macaroons, lemon ice and other frivolities in it, and we had lunch together. It was quite enjoyable even if that ridge-pole was getting mighty hard. I ate the luncheon and tossed the remains contemptuously down on the sophomores, and then the dance went on. I was taking an active part in a quadrille, talking skillfully to a very nice girl and keeping time with my feet on the shingles, because it was getting colder every minute, when a scuttle below me opened slowly, and an old man with a white beard rose slowly to a point where his upper vest pockets would have been if he had his vest on.

"Young man," he said sternly, "you are making very free with my roof!"

"I know it," said I guiltily.

"I've been trying to go to sleep for over an hour," he went on implacably.

"I'm very sorry," I said.



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"Are you?" he said eagerly. "Then why don't you get off my roof and go away?"

I looked down at the quiet fiends below who were listening with large, eager ears.

"I know I might," I answered, "but I would hate like everything to go down among those scoundrels. They've been waiting for me since eight o'clock."

The old man turned round and peered over the edge of the roof.

"Would they eat you?" he asked, sarcastically it seemed to me.

"N-no," I admitted; "but they would shave my head and put green paint on it."

"No!" said the old man. "You don't say!"

"And then they would make me climb a telegraph pole and sing songs!"

"No!"

"And then drag me through the streets by one leg and throw me into the creek!" I went on inventing giddily.

"My! My!" exclaimed the old man mockingly.

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"And I suppose you'll make me get off this roof and disgrace myself and my class," I said indignantly. "Can't you remember when you were a boy and got into trouble?"

"You a freshie?" the old man asked.

"Yes," said I indignantly, "and the whole world's against us."

He shook for quite a while.

"They put me to bed in a watering trough," he finally said in a gurgly voice.

"You!" I cried.

He nodded. Speech was slowly working its way out of the chuckles.

"With water in it!" he gasped.

I watched him with awe.

"But we caught 'em the next night and made 'em drink the water!" he said in a kind of breathless shriek.

"When was that?" I asked respectfully.

He stopped shaking and mused a minute.

"That was the winter of forty-six," he said musingly. "There weren't a hundred of us all told in Siwash that year."

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I did not have any hat to take off, but I climbed up, standing on the ridgepole, and gave a military salute.

He looked at me a minute more, wrinkles all round his eyes.

"Wait a minute," said he.

I waited. The crowd below jeered. The window above answered them. I heard pantings in the hatchway and the sound of a body hoisting itself painfully up a ladder. The whiskers reappeared. The old man followed them. He had a long coil of rope on his shoulder.

"This ought to help some," he said, giving it to me.

"Hurrah!" shouted the window above wildly.

Yells and groans came from below. I took the rope and flourished it at the window. Down came the twine and up went the rope. I looped the lower end and put a foot into it.

"Wait a bit," whispered the old man. "Come here!" I slid down to the hatchway. "Give them this with my compliments," he chuckled, handing me a large pail of water.

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I lugged it over to the end of the ridgepole and emptied it impartially in each direction. A hideous uproar arose. I crawled back, gave the old man his pail, shook his hand and blessed him. Then I stepped into the noose and went up the wall by slow hitches while pandemonium, mingled with garbage and old tin cans, surged upward from below.

Like a Roman conqueror I entered the hall, greeted my loyal class and held a levee with royal calm. The music sounded and I threw off my two overcoats and advanced to the dance. Shrieks and cheers arose. Mark Smith led me to a large mirror and I looked over my shoulder at myself. Alas! they do not make dress coats for heavy war duty. Mine was ripped from stem to stern!

Somehow, though, I did not mind it at all. Of course I had meant to be perfectly formal all that evening; but, considering the things that had gone before, I did not think a split dress coat would matter. So I danced the rest of the evening in my shirtsleeves.

IV

CURING BY SUGGESTION

There comes a time in the life of every young freshman who goes to school and acquires offices and notice and various kinds of success in his class when nature gives way under the strain just behind his ears, and the consequences are horrible in the extreme. I know, because I was that kind of a freshman and I had that kind of trouble, and I was operated upon for it by my elders and betters. It was a successful operation. Most of them are. But it makes me writhe still to think of it. Of all the cruelties on this savage old earth the custom of operating upon a freshman for domus balloonicus, without giving him ether, is the most heartless and inhuman. The Humane Society ought to broaden its scope a very little so that it could take in freshmen and give

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them the protection it is lavishing on the dumb varieties of animals.

Looking back from this period of riper wisdom I can see every excuse for the freshman whose hat band breaks with a loud crack along in the winter term. Freshmen are young — some of them inconceivably young. The bones of the head, you know, are soft and elastic in the very young. They haven't the stern resisting power of the older noodle cases. You take a seventeen-year-old freshman with wide sutures in his green young skull and fill his head full of compliments and responsibilities and admiration and success; churn these all up and mix them with a few cigarettes and a little spare time in which to think about himself, and what is the result? The mess begins to ferment and put a pressure on the skull. And what happens then? That young chap's head begins to expand and swell and get vast and bulbous and full of gas, and it leaks down into his conversation, and presently he is firmly convinced that if you were to set him in the center of darkest Africa and let him talk for a few hours the monkeys would

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be immediately wearing dark glasses and quoting Latin.

It isn't the freshman's fault. It's a disease of his youth. I have no patience with the people who think that when a young fellow of eighteen gets to making funny noises about himself and stands around on the horizon waiting for science to come and determine his height by triangulation he is going to be a lifelong annoyance and ought to be drowned like a superfluous puppy. It isn't the first time in his life that he has been loud and unnecessary, and if he goes into politics it will not be the last time. Of course, he is a very great nuisance, and I am in favor of compelling him to go around with his head in a grain sack for about six months. But he will get over it; and he has a better chance in college than anywhere else, because the upper class men in college have studied this matter and have given it their careful attention. Let a young man who is trying to wear one of the rings of Saturn for a hatband escape from college into the world in this condition and it will probably kick him to death trying to cure him.

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But leave him in school for a few months and at the end of this time, if he has not been overlooked and has had proper care and treatment, he will be wearing a thimble for a skull cap and it will be coming down over his ears at that.

Before I had attended Siwash College three months I had mislaid my shyness and modesty and was a roaring, unmitigated nuisance. When I considered what I had accomplished in those three months I felt so proud that it was difficult for even me to imagine the respect to which I was entitled. I had come to Siwash, young, unheralded, unknown, bashful, timid, undersized and ignorant, and I had, by my own sterling worth and ability, forced immediate recognition. I was president of my class. I had led the rooters through the football season and had invented four new yells. I had made the banjo club. I was mentioned for cotillion leader. I had gotten over my fear of strange girls and was so popular that it almost broke my heart when I took a young lady to a party to think of the blighting disappointment that would canker in a dozen gentle bosoms. I be-

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longed to the finest frat in college — had chosen it myself after carefully considering the merits of other applicants. And I, a freshman, was setting the fashions and being pointed out as one of the sights of the campus to strangers.

The president spoke to me by name. The college paper joked about my influence. Siwash was a better college for my coming. Of course, I was wasting my time, but I was no snob, and even if it was a little school I intended to stick to it until my junior year, anyway, and pull it up — give it some tone. And wherever I went — to Yale or Harvard or Columbia — to finish up I would always think kindly of Siwash and defend it. While others might be ashamed of the small colleges from which they rose, you would never find me concealing the fact that I went to Siwash. It's a sign of pettiness and bourgeoisie — I had just gotten that out of my French — to be ashamed of a humble beginning. Even when I was a dictator in finance and fashion in New York and great men fell over themselves to get my acceptance to dinners, I would not forget Siwash. It

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was a good little school. But of course it would never appreciate what I would do for it — etc., etc., etc., etc.

After I had reflected along these lines for a couple of hours along about the middle of November I used to look doubtfully at a couple of trolley poles and fold my ears back before I dared to edge through between them.

It's so delicious to float along like this; to meet with your own entire and enthusiastic approval; to leave off worrying about yourself because there isn't a single improvement that you can figure out; to speak kindly to nice girls and make them happier thereby; to go up to college, elbow to elbow with the masses, leaving foot-tracks that may some day be perpetuated in brass, and speaking casually with students who will tell of the event to their grandchildren. It was the happiest period of my life. I was perfect. Everybody admitted it, though it was rather impertinent in them to go to that trouble. Barring the one fact that the faculty allowed foolish pride to keep it from asking me into its meetings now and then just to get

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a new angle on its problems, I don't believe I could have asked another thing in the world.

I remember, oh, how plainly, the first little shadow that fell across my bliss. It was in Lit. class. I made it rather a point to attend classes, though it was unnecessary, for I didn't suppose any professor would have dared to make trouble. Still, I was in college for the purpose, and besides, it was a bad thing for us leaders to cut classes and start that sort of business among the student body. Lit. was a ghastly bore. It was nothing but a bunch of obituaries and a boost for a lot of books on the back shelves of the libraries. Beowulf was about as valuable to me as the Duke of Buckingham's head would have been, and I didn't care a holey sock whether Chaucer lived in the thirteenth century or in hoc signo vinces. I declined to bone on the stuff, but it was easy to stall through it, and it was a good class in which to study types. There were a lot of queer folks in it — people who seemed to think that sort of thing was important — folks you'd never meet in the ordinary course of college life.

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I was sitting in Lit. class one day late in November, with my feet stretched out, thinking rather intently on a little stunt I was working up for the banjo club, when I suddenly heard a silence — funny how loud a silence can be. I looked up quickly. Every eye was glued on me, and Professor Timmons was looking at me with a queer smile.

Then I knew I had been called on. "I beg your pardon," said I to the professor. "Did you call on me?" I was very polite and considerate.

"I did," said Professor Timmons, still smiling. The class laughed right out. It nettled me a little, but I let it pass. "What was it?" I asked.

The class laughed again. Professor Timmons laughed too. "I'm sorry to disturb you, Mr. Simmons," said he, "but will you kindly tell us upon what the fame of Cowper chiefly rests?"

I was perfectly frank. "I'll be hanged if I know," I said pleasantly.

If the class had had any sense it would have laughed at my joke as well as at the professor's. But there wasn't a giggle. Professor Timmons

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didn't say anything for about ten minutes — or maybe ten seconds. Then he cleared his throat.

"You haven't favored us with very much knowledge this term, Mr. Simmons," he said in a disquietingly quiet way. "Are you planning to remain with me permanently?"

That was all. But it was enough. It finished Professor Timmons with me. I didn't open my mouth, and when the class was dismissed I stalked out through that bunch as if they had been red ants. I never had been so mad in my life. I had been called down before the class — me, Petey Simmons, its president — called down by a cheap professor, who wasn't anything but a cold storage warehouse for dates. I simply boiled. For a minute I thought of quitting school. I dropped the idea, however. It wasn't the college's fault. But when I met Ashcroft, who was leader of the banjo club, I burned that bunch up good and plenty. I told him just what I thought about the whole business. "If I hadn't been too much of a gentleman," I stormed, "I would have shown up that old fossil right before his class. I would

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have asked him what he was doing for the coll., besides trying to flunk the students who are putting up a fight for it. But I didn't, and it wasn't because I was afraid of the faculty either."

That was Ashcroft's chance to come in with a little sympathy. But he didn't. When I had finished there was another of those stillnesses that you can almost chew up and swallow.

I looked at Ashcroft. He was smiling in a sort of queer way. Finally he reached over and patted me — me — on the back just as if I had been a yellow dog.

"Never mind, Petey," he said. "We all have our brainstorms. You'll be better pretty soon."

Nice thing to hand out to a fellow, wasn't it? I was furious. Ashcroft wasn't so much, anyway. If I hadn't come into his old banjo club that fall it would have had hard pulling on the solo part. I just turned on my heel as conspicuously as I could and left him. I figured that about five months of cold politeness on my part would teach him a few things about courtesy.

I strolled over to the football field, where the

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team was having final practice before the Thanksgiving game, and I got sorrier for myself at every step. No matter what a fellow does in the world, he isn't appreciated. He can work himself into the grave for his school, and the yaps who stand around and do the light yelling will kick him the first chance they get. By the time I had reached the field I had a right good notion to cease all my activities for a few months and just let the school sweat along. In fact, I decided to do it. It made me feel better. I began to picture to myself the pleasure I would take in explaining my reasons to the delegations from the banjo club and the rooters' chorus and the freshman class and the cotillion club. I would be just as pleasant as I could be, but firm. And when they had wormed the reason out of me they would see what comes of being too darned fresh.

I thought it all out and it made me good-natured. I strolled over to the side lines, carefully unconscious of the fact that every one was looking at me, and nodding here and there at the fellows of our crowd and the other students whom I

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knew. I always made it a point to speak to a large number of students because I wanted to be democratic. Hogboom, the captain, was out of practice that day with a lame ankle and was sitting on the side lines. I strolled over to him, pushed his hat over his eyes, kicked him in the ribs, and finally tackled him about the knees and put him down, neatly as you please. There were seniors who would have given their eyes to be that familiar with Hoggie.

He called me a fool and told me not to twist his ankle any more than I could help. While he was picking up his hat Beems of the Fly Gams, a senior who was sitting near, called over. "Say, Hogboom," he said, "haven't you salted your freshmen yet?"

Everybody laughed, and I saw he meant to insult me. I could feel myself getting red, and it made me mad, for if there is anything I detest it is the way my face butts in and tries to advertise my feelings. I just shot it right back at Beems.

"Here's one you fellows didn't get a chance to salt," I said.

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Some fellow back of me snickered, but nobody laughed, and all of a sudden it occurred to me that I would have given a lot more money than I had not to have said that. Nobody said anything, and I stood around and whistled a minute to show the whole crowd that they could go to grass, individually or collectively, just as they pleased. I turned around and walked over and examined the team's sweaters. After that I went up the field and looked critically at the sunset, and then I went away and walked around the town a while. I felt awfully funny—something like a cat that has killed the canary. I couldn't understand it. I was too big a man to feel that way. And yet, was I?

I didn't want to go up to the house for dinner that night because I didn't feel sociable, and I finally decided to go down to Mark Smith's room and eat supper with him. I would have to help get it and it would be a lot of fun. Anyway, I hadn't seen much of Mark for quite a while, and I didn't want him to think I was feeling superior. So I bought a pie and some stuff and went up to

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Mark's room and told him I had come to supper, and for him to get a big hustle on and get it ready and I would help. We had a nice supper and I felt better. Mark was feeling great because he had a chance at a laundry agency that would net him four dollars a week and let him go to a boarding club, and we had a jolly old visit. Mark was square, anyway, and a lot more of a fellow than some of the bluejays I was trotting with. He had depth and understanding, and it was with perfect confidence that I told him about the insult I had gotten that afternoon. I wanted to put it up to him as strongly as I could, so I told him the whole thing—how I felt about it and everything. “Now,” I asked when I had finished, “what do you think I had better do?”

Mark was busy darning a sock and evidently thinking the thing over. But when I asked him he looked up. “Oh, I wouldn't worry about it,” he said carelessly; “every one makes a break now and then.”

“I know it,” I said eagerly. “But still, there are some things —”

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"Professor Timmons isn't a bad fellow," said Mark.

"No," I said generously. "He's a real good old chap."

"If you went up to him before class tomorrow and apologized he'd laugh at the whole thing."

I felt like a man who had been aiming at a bear with an old rusty gun and had had it shot backward.

"Me!" I gasped. "Apologize!" I saw it all in a flash. Mark was on the other side, too. It made me so mad in a second that I could have bitten Siwash College out of the map.

I was so mad I couldn't think. I got up. "The whole bunch of you think you're pretty smart," I said sputtering, "but you can go chase yourselves. I'm through with you."

"Too bad," said Mark. He was laughing. That made me madder, if possible. I struck out blindly. "I've been wasting a lot of time with you," I said. "You don't seem to have appreciated it. I'll just bid you good night."

I took my hat. I thought that would land

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Mark, for I was the most influential friend he had. I didn't really mean to go, at heart. But he got up and opened the door for me.

"Come back when it's all over, Petey," he said soberly, "and I'll be glad to see you."

"What's all over?" I snapped.

"What's coming to you in the next few months," he said soberly.

"Oh, go to thunder!" I said, and went out.

It was after ten and I was tired. I went straight home. Four or five of the fellows were sitting in the smoking-room downstairs, which was peculiar, because it was against the rules in study hours. When I came in they all jumped up and Saunders went to the stairs.

"Here he is, fellows," he said. "Come on down."

"Sit down," said Saunders to me.

"I don't want to," I said sullenly. "I'm going to bed."

He took me without a word and sat me on the davenport. I struggled and cussed him, but Hogboom and Allen came over and sat beside me.

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They were on the football squad, and I was a toy in their hands. The room filled up with men. Suddenly I wasn't in my own chapter house with my loving brothers. I seemed to be in a court of justice.

"What's the matter? Somebody dead?" I asked, just to show them that I wasn't impressed.

"Shut up, freshman," said Saunders, who was president that year. "We don't want you to talk except when we tell you to. We're tired of you and we're going to try to improve you a good deal so you will be fit to have around the house."

"If you don't want to have me around the house you don't have to," I said sullenly.

Saunders went over to the door and opened it. "Want to go?" he asked me.

It suddenly occurred to me that I was perfectly crazy to stay. But I was mighty uncomfortable where I was. "What's the matter with me?" I asked, twisting my hat around in my hands.

"What's the matter with him, fellows?" asked Saunders.

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"He's fresh," said Bailey. He had been one of my best friends.

"He's darned fresh," said Whipple. He had proposed my name to the banjo club.

"He's so fresh that the other frats are asking us if he lets us sleep in the house nights," said Allen, who had been kinder to me than any one, and whom I dearly loved.

"Do you hear that, freshman?" said Saunders. "They think you're fresh. Does every one here think this"—pointing at me with his thumb—"is fresh?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" came the answer in a thunderous chorus. Every one was against me.

"Then salt him," said Saunders severely.

Two men brought in a saucer with some salt in it. "Get down on your knees and lap that up," said Saunders.

"But," I began.

"He needs persuading," said Saunders mildly. "Shall we persuade him?"

"Yes, yes." "Me first." "No, me." There was almost a row for the privilege, but it was soon

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settled and I was persuaded. I can't bring myself to describe this painful performance. It brought back my very young days vividly.

"Are you persuaded?" said Saunders, finally.

"Yes," I gasped with difficulty, for I had been face down for quite a while. I was released, and, getting down on my hands and knees, I lapped up the salt, while the assembly commented with awful brutality on the performance.

"Does it well for a great man, doesn't he?"

"He's not a bad fellow on his hands and knees."

"It will take a barrel to make him endurable."

"You wouldn't think a little runt like that could be so loud."

There was a lot of the salt. I gurgled, and gagged, and got sick, but they didn't seem to mind it. I finally finished it and looked up, cold sweat on my face and feeling more miserable than I ever had in my life.

"Do you think that will help you?" said Saunders severely.

"Yes, sir," I said humbly.

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"You don't need any more?" he asked anxiously.

"No," I said, almost frantically. "I can take a hint."

"Because we've laid in a whole barrel," said Saunders, "just for your use. Now, has anyone else any complaint against Simmons?"

"His head is swelled," said Hogboom.

"Oh, awfully," said Allie Bangs, who was a freshman himself, but had convalesced early.

"He's afraid to go through anything but a double door."

"He talks about 'Us representative men.'"

"He wonders if we appreciate his coming here to school."

"He patronizes the professors."

One by one they diagnosed my feelings so accurately that I shuddered. Never had I heard what I thought put into words in that phonographic fashion. When the indictment was finished I wanted to take the first kick at myself.

"Are we agreed that Simmons' head is too large?" asked Saunders finally.

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"We are," was the chorus.

"Then soak it," said Saunders. A large pail, the kind they used in stables, was brought in filled with water. I was up-ended and lowered head first into this about a dozen times. Then, while I sat and coughed and wheezed and spattered water from my aching lungs and nose, Saunders addressed me severely.

"Simmons," he said, "you are regarded as one of the college marvels. Your head is so large that the faculty doesn't know whether you are a human being or a satellite on legs. You have got to reduce it about three thousand sizes, and we are going to help you all we can. We won't charge you anything for our services either. Now, what other complaints are there against Simmons?"

"He dresses too loud," said half a dozen men at once.

"You can't hear the college bell for him," said Hogboom.

"The clothiers buy horrible things and bet on him whether he'll buy them or not," said Wilbur.

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"He buys shouting socks and then rolls his trousers up to show them," said my old friend Bailey.

"Very well," said Saunders, "what shall we do for it?"

"Barrel, barrel," came the answer.

"Simmons, the frat thinks you'll look better in a barrel," said Saunders. "Just step into the other room, take off those remarks and get into the barrel you'll find there."

I felt my way out of the room with cries of "Hurry up!" and "Lively, you!" chasing me. I stripped to my underclothes and got into the barrel. "Come out," called Saunders. I grabbed the barrel by the edge and came shivering into the room. As I stood there with perspiration stains and salt on my face, bare arms holding up my costume with a deathlike grip, and half a yard of bare legs protruding from the lower end of the barrel, I awakened more enthusiasm than I had ever dreamed of creating, even in my most ambitious flights of imagination. Shrieks, yells and cheers, gasps, howls and hysterics came from my

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loving brethren. As they quieted down they began to comment on my appearance.

"Is that the way a god looks in his underwear?"

"I thought he was mostly clothes."

"He looks a lot better, though, without that vest."

"He doesn't strut as much in that barrel."

"He ought to wear it all the time. He wouldn't be able to pound his acquaintances on the back."

"Nor smoke cigarettes on the campus."

"His young lady friends ought to see him in this rig. It might save a lot of broken hearts."

"All right, touch off the flashlight."

"Bang!"

Then they let me go up to my room and put on some old clothes. I wanted to stay there and inhale illuminating gas, but when Hogboom called to me I got out of that room in two jumps. Somehow I couldn't bear to think of disappointing that crowd in anything they might want.

When I returned there was a large blackboard in one end of the room. Saunders was standing

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before it. "Brothers," said he, "have you any other fault to find with this freshman?"

"He borrows clothes," said Winthrop.

"You bet he does," snorted Bailey, who roomed with me. "I can't keep a tie to myself ten minutes."

"That's a bad fault," said Saunders. "It ought to be worth five."

"No, ten," shouted Bailey.

"Make it seven," said Saunders. "Freshman, get down over Hogboom's knees."

Seven swift, stinging slaps jarred me from truck to keelson. "What else?" asked Saunders.

"He makes bad jokes at the table," said one.

"He does, he does," came a general roar.

"Ten," said Saunders.

"Mr. President, I protest," shouted Allen. "I've suffered more than that myself from those jokes."

In the end I got twenty-five. They were awful. They jarred my spine and my soul. They jarred tears into my eyes. I wanted to cry, but I didn't. I would have let them dismember me first.

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"What else?" asked Saunders.

"He doesn't study. He's endangering the reputation of the frat. He'll get canned out in the winter term," said Briggs.

"We can't cure that in one night," said Saunders, "but we can make a beginning; twenty-five. Freshman, why don't you study?"

I got up stiffly and swallowed about forty times. "I haven't flunked any more than most fellows," I said in a bruised and battered little voice.

"Better make it thirty-five," said Hogboom. They did. I dug my nails into my hands and swore that if I cried I'd feed myself to a trolley car that night.

"You can go any time you want, you know," said Saunders after the treatment.

I got up and grabbed twice at Hogboom before I could get hold of him and hang on. "I — I'm not a quitter," I said.

"Hurrah!" said every one so suddenly and heartily that I got gulpier than ever.

"But you're going to quit some things, aren't you?" said Saunders.

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"You can't spank them out of me," I flashed.

"We're not trying to," said Saunders. "We're just calling your attention to them. You know, we've been hinting a long time on some of them."

"You were sassy to a professor today," continued Saunders, after giving me plenty of chance. "Why?"

"Because I was a fool, I guess."

"Give him ten," shouted some one.

"I object," growled Hogboom. "You can't spank a man for telling the truth."

"If you don't mind," I said, "I'd like to take a few for that professor business. It will make me feel better."

So they gave them to me. They also gave me five for criticising the food and ten for talking about my father's bank, and a dozen for being condescending to outsiders, and a few miscellaneous swats for small crimes. Then Saunders looked at me severely and pointed to the blackboard. There I was, mirrored to myself—"inconsiderate," "a punster," "lazy," "impudent," "boastful,"

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“condescending” and “complaining.” There was Petey Simmons as others saw him — the Petey Simmons whom a day before I could scarcely think of without a reverent admiration for the works of nature. And as I saw the list I shrank and shrank, and dissolved and shriveled, and fell away, and became a little trembling freshman with a sore and shaken body and a mind the size of a pinhead, weighed down with the task of becoming endurable and possibly enjoyable to my fellow men.

I was little Petey Simmons, a green freshman who had wasted three months learning all the things he shouldn't; Petey Simmons, the college joke, the campus nuisance, the loud noise on the streets, the pest of the chapter house. I had always been Petey Simmons, an undersized consumer of perfectly good oxygen, but some one had patted me on the head a few months ago and it had swelled — heavens, how it had swelled. Suddenly all my grandiose doings of those insane months rose up vividly before me. I gagged at the thought of them. Oh, how sick I had been! But I was better now. The swelling was going

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down. Explode a dynamite bomb in almost any swelling and it will be materially reduced.

"You wouldn't care to say a word, would you, freshman?" said Saunders after a long silence.

I got up, very stiffly. "I guess not," I stammered. "I don't know enough to say anything except — except — thank you."

"Hurrah!" said every one. That jolt was too much. I cried.

Then they let me go upstairs to bed and called down Wanswroth, who was a freshman, too, and very far gone in it. The next morning he ate very little more than I did and acted like a man who had fallen four million miles out of a blissful dream, landing very hard. But we never confided in each other.

When you take a young man who is contented with himself and reduce him to the mangled remains of everything he had imagined himself to be, you can't expect him to recover at once. I was quite low and miserable for a week. Every little thing that I had stepped carefully over during my Colossus days rose up and towered above me, and

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kept me stretching my neck and dodging like an ant under a lodge parade. Suddenly Siwash was a mighty college again, as it had been when I was in high school, and it was full of businesslike young giants who would have to be encouraged to tolerate me. But finally I did something that made me feel better. It was lonely around the house — not because the boys wouldn't notice me, but because I had to keep so quiet to keep them from doing it. So I put on my hat about nine one evening and went down to Mark Smith's room. I knocked timidly. Two weeks before I would have kicked the door in.

"Come in," said Mark.

I edged in cautiously and said "Hello."

"Oh," said Mark, looking at me sharply, "hello."

I went all the way in and stood waiting. Nothing happened.

"I'm back again," I said finally.

"So soon?" said Mark.

"Yes," I said, "it's happened."

"What's happened?"

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“What was coming to me.”

“Oh!”

I edged over to a chair and sat down.

“Sure it’s a cure?” asked Mark suspiciously.

“Say,” I remarked with emphasis, “if you see any signs of it coming back, will you kindly take a baseball bat and flatten it?”

“Yep,” said Mark. “Have you got your Livy pounded out?”

V

RUNAWAY ORATORY

I've just been reading the romantic story of Montague Barnes, who began life a poor boy with only one parent and two shoes and who has recently taken his seat in Congress in firm, resounding tones. It's all excessively interesting to me and would be, even if any of the facts mentioned were true. For I know Monty Barnes; I've known him for years — ever since the time we sat in the literary society together at Siwash College and Monty used to get up and make speeches with a voice that sounded like a dried leaf in a wash boiler.

I remember Monty's first speech as plainly as if I had heard it. I can repeat it word for word. He said: "M-mr. Oh-hairman, I—I m-murn we adjooove." He was holding on to two chairs

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when he made it. Told me afterward that he stopped them as they were going around him and used them as substitutes for knees. He was the shyest man and the worst speaker who ever got into the Gnothautii Literary Society. He had sat for a year before he dared make the above speech. And it took him another year to get so fluent that he could address the society with the aid of only one chair. I remember how we used to look forward to the nights when Monty ran the society. As a chairman he reminded me of a puny child trying to herd wild cats. You could chase him into the rafters with a point of order and paralyze him for a whole evening with an amendment to an amendment.

Monty was so meek when we took him in that he had to have a written permission to sneeze in chapel. I used to watch him trying to arrange his knees when he wanted to speak. You know how important it is that your knees shall be in good voice when you want to address a meeting. Time after time he would get part way up with a few remarks balanced on the end of his tongue and

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then his knees would balk and insurgé, and by the time he had braced them up he had mislaid his remarks and the meeting had surged on. I used to pity him, though goodness knows I wouldn't have gotten up at that time for the world. I was worse than he, but I was resigned to it. I remember, too, the night when Barnes suddenly found himself sailing along about one thousand miles above sea level riding his train of thought and feeding new thoughts into his mind as fast as he emptied it. I can see now the look of ecstasy on his face — the look of a man who has just discovered how to drive an aeroplane and ride the gale on an even keel. From that time on you couldn't head Barnes off. He became a society nuisance. He debated and orated and remarked at every meeting, and it was a common thing for some member to rise in the middle of his eloquence and say:

“Mr. Chairman, I think it is about time to cap the gas-well.”

And now little Barnes is in Congress. It's two years since he hung out his law shingle. I'll bet

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he started political speaking before he got his sign painted, and I'll bet they couldn't stop him either until he had said what he wanted to. I'd like to have heard his campaign. I'd like to have seen the surprise of some of the tough old politicians who rose up to smother him with scorn and got banged on the head with the unabridged dictionary. And I'll bet Congress doesn't worry him either. He's had Gnothautii training, Monty has, and no measly speaker is going to head him off when he has a face full of words.

That's what old Gnothautii did for Monty. It did a lot for all of us, too. There is nothing in college that can touch the literary society for teaching a man to get up and slam a few choice, hand-picked sentiments into the other fellow at a minute's warning. Looking back on those society nights I cannot feel surprised at the large number of awkward youngsters who afterward went out and began bossing congressional districts before they could raise mustaches. After a man has spent a few years baling up and delivering his ideas in the face of parliamentary objections, whoops, yells,

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sarcasm and sometimes furniture, a little thing like hypnotizing a well-policed ward caucus is only child's play for him. They were so fatally critical in our society. You could talk to it as long as you interested it and no longer. And the members were so pleasantly frank about your little faults of speaking. You didn't have to guess at those faults — oh, no. At the end of the meeting the critic got up and told the society about them. He made his meaning perfectly plain. We always took care to choose a critic who had a good command of language. A critic's report in Gnothautii usually ran about like this:

“Tonight's meeting averaged about four kernels of thought per mile of words. The boys who spoke ought to have told us what they were talking about before they began to speak. Then we would have gotten it. Albertson's delivery was fine, but he overshot the mark a little. He was talking to some friend 'downtown. Albertson thinks that whenever he hasn't an argument he can slip in a yell and no one will know the difference. I'm going to wear ear-muffs when he speaks next time. I want

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to say to Frankling that this audience isn't afraid when he points his forefinger at it. We know it isn't loaded. A forefinger is a mighty poor substitute for a fact, anyway. Give us more facts, Frankling. Simmons needs a guide when he debates. He got off the subject a dozen times to-night and wandered around after it like a lost dog hunting his master. Simmons ought to realize that when he gets up to debate unprepared he advertises the fact by everything that he neglects to say. I can't criticise much of Smith's oration, because I didn't wake up in time for the peroration. Smith thinks the way to convince an audience is to smother it. The way to learn how to speak is to learn how to stop. If Smith would begin trying to stop about five minutes before he begins speaking he would get done in a reasonable time ——"

And so on, night after night, until we hated the critic with fiendish vim and worked on our orations and debates as if we really expected to save the nation with them. If I were a boy again and wanted to start out for the President's chair, I'd

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join a good literary society in a small college and bang away for four years. It's the best recipe I know.

Literary society night was a great feature at old Siwash. Friday and Saturday nights we frivoleed and on Sunday nights we studied. Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays we filled up in various unholy ways, but on Thursday nights we went to literary society. On Thursday night chums separated, brothers parted and enemies lined up side by side, for half of us went to Gnothautii and half of us to Adelphi, and between the two there was a gulf as wide as the misunderstanding between the Republican party.

Of course, our constitutional object as a society was to conduct debates, emit orations, produce extempore speeches and perfect ourselves in the art of ruling a meeting with a firm hand when in the chair, and of upsetting it in the interests of the minority when on the floor — two accomplishments on which the noble art of self-government was based until they began to ring in these new-fangled and un-American primaries. But, after all, our

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deepest and most throbbing interest was our rivalry with Adelphi. It was hereditary. The two societies had been organized within a year of each other and the first act of Gnothautii was to defy the prestige of the arrogant Adelphians. In the late forties the two societies fought on the streets after meetings. During the war Gnothautii paraded its twenty enlisted members and jeered at Adelphi, which could only produce fifteen. In the seventies Adelphi produced its first governor, and for three years swept in all the impressionable youngsters on the strength of the glorious future which the society generously provided its members. In the eighties the two societies built fine halls, a dead heat in cost and equipment, and started out on the long task of paying for them.

After that the rivalry spread out into a long skirmish line with a hundred fighting points. We owed more money than Adelphi did — but we pulled off grander lecture courses. They had a piano — but we had two magnificent plaster busts of Cicero and Demosthenes. They had more interstate oratorical winners than we — but we had

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twice as many debate winners. They had tinted and decorated walls in their meeting hall — but we had a splendid set of leather upholstered chairs. They were ritualistic; we were practical and plain. They were careless in parliamentary practice; we held firmly to formal rules and grew rich in fines. They would start a debate on the desirability of Cuba and end it on the desirability of whiskers. On the other hand, they charged that at the end of a forty-five-minute oration by one of our leading men, during my freshman year, the speaker had to waken the chairman in order that the rest of the society might be fined for sleeping. On every point we viewed each other with scorn and defiance. It added zest to our meetings and made hard work a pleasure. It made us outdo ourselves each year in our annual open meetings, to which the outside world was invited — and that reminds me that away back about nine o'clock I started to tell about one of these same open meetings, which I shall now do or forever hold my peace.

The year's rivalry always culminated in these open meetings. We held them on succeeding

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Thursday nights in the late spring. First, Adelphi performed while we Gnothautians sat with the other guests and tried not to show our amusement at their boyish efforts. The next week we unchained our soaringest orators and most peppery debaters, and I must say that the Adelpheans in the audience always acted like a lot of rhinoceri, so far as appreciation of true wisdom went. Then we spent the next year aspersing each other's last meeting and preparing for the next display.

No one realized better than I that while I was a loyal member of Gnothautii I was not doing my full share to maintain her glory. I attended regularly, paid as much in fines as any one, and could hold my own against any three Adelpheans in a rough-and-tumble talk about our merits on the campus. But as a debater, an orator, a prize winner, or any sort of a future great member, I was a ghastly failure. I had not contributed a peep to the fame of the society. It worried me until I realized that there must be humble camp followers and sappers and miners in every army as well as tall, towering monuments of gold braid. Then I

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cheered up and began to sap and mine Adelphi to the very best of my ability.

It was a pleasant and exciting process, because there were a lot of us doing it in both societies. Some men are constitutionally fitted to listen to speeches. I admire them. They form the bones and sinew of the great American audience, without which oratory could not exist. When I think of the heroic listeners who turn out, rain or shine, settle back in hard chairs, and endure speeches on every subject from "Child Culture" to "Universal Peace," I am filled with awe at their pluck. For I never had it and never will have it. I can listen to a speech for about seven minutes. After that my right leg begins to itch, and my back hurts, and I begin to think of the incredible length of a half hour, and presently I get up and go away. I can't help it. I'm just the same way in a dentist's chair. I get awfully tired of it after a few minutes.

Naturally on each meeting night I began to get restless in the midst of the first long speech, and always my mind turned to Adelphi. I felt that if

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I could go out into the ante-room or downstairs, or downtown, I could work out some little plan to crush and humiliate that low-browed society. But there was a rule against leaving the room for more than three minutes during meeting. It was a rule of self-preservation for the society and was rigidly enforced. At any minute the president could order a roll call and the missing members were fined fifteen cents. So I had to use strategy, as did the other members who yearned for relief from oratory, and the meetings were usually a long battle between a sharp-eyed chairman, a few cowardly informers and a dozen ingenious absentees. We retired ill. We craved leave to go out and round up a distinguished alumnus. We discovered marauders in the ante-room. We retired to shovel off the freshly fallen snow from the walks. We retired to harass Adelphi. That was my specialty. I harassed Adelphi from every quarter. I did it unremittingly and relentlessly. If I could not make Gnothautii proud I could at least keep Adelphi worried. I harassed them by getting into the basement and turning out their lights. I

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coaxed a watermelon out of their ante-room over into ours. Together with Tom Andrews I persuaded two darkies from the town to go into their meeting and sing banjo selections. The frivolous Adelphians welcomed them with great relief until the singers gave a final encore from the rear door with a line of retreat established. I wrote that encore myself. It was all about Adelphi, and I still think it was my finest literary effort.

All of these harassings led to reprisals, and the two societies became armed citadels. Occasionally a member of a rival society was captured on hostile ground and dragged before the other society, which usually stood him in a corner and skinned him with sarcasm. Now and then a meeting would suspend while an emissary from the other society would stalk in stern, scornful and defiant to deliver a challenge to debate or oratory. But otherwise there were no truces, and by the end of my second year we were capturing each other's members on meeting nights and locking them in our closets with great regularity.

That spring it was evident, even to us, that un-

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less something desperate was done, Adelphi would make our open meeting sound like a pale, timid hoot in a churchyard. Adelphi was roaringly prosperous. She had the interstate orator. She had the best debaters in school. She had a humorist who was in tremendous demand in college affairs. She had a real author, who had received genuine money from an actual magazine, and she had a quartet which sang original songs. Against this we had nothing out of the ordinary to put up, except a poor old poet who taught school for several years before coming to college, and whose verse made the college paper with difficulty. We were greatly depressed over the outlook. For once it seemed as if we would have to take the count with no argument. And Adelphi was correspondingly cheerful. The Adelphians were unbearable, in fact. They talked about that open meeting through the winter until you would have thought that it was going to be a national political convention. As a matter of fact, these meetings were no great shakes, anyway. They didn't represent the real solid work of the societies. Every one with

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any sense knew this. We Gnothautians all did.

Somehow I felt that this was my chance to do a great deed for my society, not by orating for it — the idea gave me cold shivers — but by putting some kind of a crimp in the Adelphi programme. This was a most uncomfortable feeling to have, because I didn't have the slightest idea how to carry it out. No crude methods, like putting disulphide in the hall or cutting off the heat, would do. That would be like winning a race by hiring some one to hold one's rival. I had to make Adelphi smear up its own meeting.

It was an awful ambition. I was always cursed by plans five sizes too large for me. They kept me feverish and out of condition half the time. I tried to tell this plan to go lie down and let me alone. It was keeping me awake nights. But it wouldn't. It hung around and sat on the edge of my bed and got me hollow-eyed and so nervous that I got to wandering around the town nights to get away from myself. That was how I happened to stumble into an entertainment in a little church in the south end.

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It was being given by a church literary society — every one had literary societies in Jonesville — and as soon as I heard the extempore speaker I began to get all prickly and perspiring. This was the first symptom of a great idea with me. The extempore speaker was a very young man with wavy hair and a flow of words that made Niagara sound trickly in comparison. He was a natural orator. Any one within three blocks could tell that. They told me as he thundered that he could speak on any subject, and that his word pictures were marvelous. They told me also that they always put him on at the end of the programme, in order that the audience might leave when it got enough, for the young man had no terminal facilities whatever. Beyond this one fault he was a fine speaker, they declared, and I admitted it as I listened to him. He rode metaphors and similes as soaringly as the eagle rides the gale. He plunged into the past and drew out hundreds of years of history at a grab. He rose shriekingly to denunciation and sank gracefully into poetry. He was unconquerable and unquenchable; also his

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grammar was most interesting. I stayed until most of the society had gone, and when I left I was happy. The young man was still speaking, and each hoarse whoop which followed me down the street made my idea seem more dazzling.

The freshman speech was one of the features of our open meetings. It gave each society a chance to parade its most promising freshman orator. Usually it was declaimed with a great fury and as much eloquence as the youngster could muster. We all laughed at these speeches — you couldn't help laughing at the wildly revolving arms — but we took a deep interest in them — for these boys were future college orators and debaters, and whenever a society had an infant phenom it gave him full swing at its open meeting. This year there were no phenoms on either side. I was resigned to this fact as far as Gnothautii was concerned, but I was desperately anxious to round out Adelphi's programme. If only Adelphi could have this young man to begin its open meeting I didn't seem to care who closed it. They might even import their senator alumnus if they chose.

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It would give me great pleasure to see him wait his turn.

I took my large new idea home with me and sat on it patiently for a few days. But it didn't hatch. It was a fine idea, but the shell was too thick. To begin with, the boy wasn't in college. To end with, he wasn't in Adelphi. I batted my head against this beginning and this ending for a while, and then took the whole business over to "Chub" Frazier and asked him if he could see anything in it.

"Chub" Frazier's real college name was "Chubby." "Chub" was only an affectionate diminutive. He was a tall, lantern-jawed young man, who could have used a double-barreled shotgun for a pair of pants if it hadn't been for his feet. He contributed a large share of the ozone in Gnothautii meetings and was always adding to the joy of us listeners by rising soberly to inquire for a blue print and working plans of the speaker's pet joke, or to announce that the last debater's batting average on dates was only .187, and to ask indignantly if heedless young students were to be

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permitted to massacre Nero two hundred years before his birth without a protest from the society. "Chub" was a junior and skilled in vain deeds, and when he heard my story he embraced me with vigor.

"Petey, my boy, I have misjudged you," said he. "I have wondered why you persisted in sitting around in Gnothautii and breathing up so much of our nice air. I apologize. You are a patriot. Lead me to this young windstorm."

It didn't take "Chub" two hours to arrange the plan of campaign. But he didn't go to the young man first. He went to the church society and explained to the leaders how shocking it was that so talented a young man should be driving a grocery wagon when he should be attending college and preparing to represent his country in Congress. He did this so well that a subscription was taken up, and within two weeks Mordecai Boggs was only delivering groceries in his spare hours. The rest of the time he was specializing at Siwash in rhetoric, composition, oratory and English literature.

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He was a shy, freckled young man, was Mordecai, for all his eloquence on the stage, and he did not get acquainted very fast. This was just as it should be, for, naturally enough, before any one else in college noticed him "Chub" and I were fast friends and felt sure we could lead him into our sacred society with a wave of the hand. We felt so sure about it that we couldn't help bragging a little. In fact, I was so indiscreet as to mention to Pilcher, an Adelphi freshman, as we were dressing in the gym one evening late in March that we had a young freshman cinched for our open meeting who would not only out-orate their whole society but would set the world's record for freshman screechers of all weights, heights and cylinder areas.

Pilcher was so scornful that he didn't spend over half an hour trying to worm the freshman's name out of me. It didn't do any good. I can keep a secret. But Chub couldn't. He got to talking with an Adelphi senior the very next day, and in the heat of an argument over the societies' merits, running back to the time when Banning,

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Gnothautii '46, won nine intersociety debates in a row, he not only bragged about our new freshman but let his name slip out. And the very next day we caught two Adelphians taking Boggs down to stuff him with oysters and fiction about Adelphi.

We were so mad that we made the whole campus echo. Both Chub and I went to the Adelphi president and denounced their efforts as high-handed, underhanded, backhanded and two-faced, to say nothing of cloven-hoofed. We had practically pledged this young man to our society, we declared. We had induced him to enter college. He was our property. If they were men they would go away and leave him to us. We almost cried as we pled.

Would they go away? Will the tiger go away from the nice, succulent young lamb? They just laughed at us. We made a desperate effort to persuade Boggs to stay with us, and Chub and I hung around him so closely that it wasn't until a week before their open meeting that they finally got him. They ran him into the society on the very night of our own open meeting—held a

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special meeting early to do it — and then they came over in a body and listened to our poor, squeaky little programme with jeers written all over their faces.

Chub and I barely existed during that week. The thought that we had lost so promising a young orator filled us with deepest woe. But it wasn't half as deep as our suspense. What if something should jar his relations with Adelphi, and he should really come back to us after all? Between shivers of woe and quivers of fear we had no peace at all. Besides, we were having a deuce of a time to get a respectable representation of Gno-thautii out to the Adelphi open meeting. The other members didn't seem to take the slightest interest in the event, and we didn't dare tell our secret. Two people can keep a secret, but when you let another in it becomes public opinion.

On the night of the meeting we went early in order to get good seats, well to the rear. It was lucky we did, for Adelphi was determined that no friend should miss its magnificent meeting. Long before the programme opened people were stand-

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ing in the back of the hall and jamming the door of the ante-room. We poor shivering Gnothautians, a dozen in number, sat solemnly in little bunches and tried to look resigned and forbearing when the Adelphi officials paused now and then to make sure we were perfectly comfortable, masking over their triumph with hospitable smiles.

The chairman took his seat amid great applause, and after the trifling preliminaries, such as roll call, the reading of the minutes, and the few parliamentary sparrings, just to show the visitors the perfect working of the machinery, the Adelphi quartet took the stage and performed with tremendous éclat. We had to admit that it was a good quartet. We hated to do it, but eager and kindly old ladies on all sides turned to us and unwittingly ground our souls by asking us if we didn't think it was. That's the worst of these open meetings where the rival society is performing. The kindly guests are not satisfied with enjoying the entertainment themselves. They surround you on all sides and insist that you enjoy it with them.

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The quartet retired after the third encore, and then, with something of a flourish, the chairman stepped forward and in a few well-chosen words prepared the audience for an unexpected treat. There had come to college recently, he said, a young man, unheralded, unknown, unconscious even of the great genius which he bore with him to Siwash. He was a Jonesville youth. Kindly fortune had guided his footsteps into Adelphi, where sterling character and future abilities are always welcomed and made the most of. And it has been discovered that within this modest, blushing youth there lurked abilities such as fixed Demosthenes permanently in history and made the fame of the younger Pitt burgeon and wax forever. He was referring, he said, to the newest Adelphian, and one who he predicted might some day be the most famous Adelphian — Mr. Mordecai Boggs, who would now deliver the freshman oration on the subject, "Our Nation's Peril."

A great cheer rang out from Adelphi and young Boggs stepped forward. It was the proudest mo-

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ment of his life and he was loaded for it. Without any preliminaries he plunged into "Our Nation's Peril," laying open the past with one sweeping gash, and calling Cæsar, Alexander, and Nero from their musty tombs in the first paragraph.

For a minute we Gnothautians were dazed. Boggs certainly did have a sweep of language. It was good language, too, because it had been carefully cobbled up by leading Adelphians, and Boggs was sticking strictly to the text. He sketched in the condition of the world during the days of Rome with a few reverberating sentences, and as he rose to his first climax Frazier and I lifted up our voices and gave a tremendous cheer.

We had asked and pled just one favor from our fellow Gnothautians in that meeting. It was that they should cheer when we did. They now rose to the task and swelled the uproar. The other visitors, slightly surprised, joined in. A bright smile burst out on Boggs' face and he plunged ahead with redoubled energy.

It was certainly a grand oration. We had to admit it. Boggs sent the Roman empire howling

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down to the abysmal depths of degradation in six minutes by the watch, and grabbed up Spain without even a pause for breath. Once again he soared and once again we Gnothautians allowed a cheer to burst from us, overcome by his eloquence.

There is nothing so contagious as an extempore cheer from the audience. Everybody picked it up and the old hall fairly rocked. It was elixir for Boggs. He took a deep breath, shook his head slightly, as if to indicate that what had transpired was merely a warming-up exercise, and then he went at the rest of that oration like a lion insurging against all Africa. Within five minutes he had left the track and had skidded into extempore eloquence with an average of four lapses in grammar per lungful of speech.

It was magnificent. We cheered him at every pause. The Adelphians were getting nervous now and the chairman tried to rap the meeting to order. But he might as well have said "H-sh" to a windstorm. Boggs was in full career. He was a young man of large chest development and great endurance, coupled with a voice which howled and

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shrieked like a steam siren as he swept dizzily from climax to climax. He settled the Spaniards, demolished Napoleon and then went back and kicked over the Grecian civilization in four hoarse yells. We rose to our feet and cheered him wildly. He thundered down to the present, fought four revolutionary battles in one chromatic whoop, and then apotheosized Lincoln with an upward swoop of the arm which sent him reeling backward to the wall. Never had the society heard anything like it. We got upon our chairs to emphasize our appreciation. The chairman hammered frantically and several sergeants-at-arms came over to us and talked threateningly. But what could they do? When you invite a hall full of people to listen to your speeches you can't throw them out for applauding them.

Boggs was perspiring freely and the light in his eyes was wild. It was his greatest triumph and he intended to gorge himself on it. In another ten minutes he had lapped up American history and had settled down comfortably though volcanically into a discussion of present-day problems. We

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encouraged him as best we could and the result warmed our hearts. It was certainly pleasant to extend a friendly hand to a shrinking freshman, and to assure him about four times a minute that the world was with him.

"And ain't it true, I ask of you gathered here tonight, if the rich are not getting richer and the poor, my fellow citizens, sinking slowly down into the slimy jaws of the slough of despond?"

"Hurrah!" we answered frantically.

"And then you take the money power. Who's got all the money in this country? I tell you, little do we realize the gravity of this here country at this situation. The dollar that the poor man earns by the sweat of his brow is filched forth from his pocket by the siren call of the financial octopus."

"Hurrah!" we yelled again.

"You say politics! Bah! Politics is rotten. We think we are free men in America, but what good does a vote do? The most rotten and obliquitous friend of the classes has got more power I say than a million free-born voters of the masses,

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of whom we are some right here in this room tonight ——”

“ Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah for the masses ! ”

We didn't have to lead these cheers. The rest of the visitors were frantic with delight, and as Boggs responded to every cheer with another superhuman shout of defiance against wickedness they laughed and shrieked with glee. As for us Gnothautians, we sat more or less quiet, partly from exhaustion and partly from a solemn joy which was flooding our entire beings. Boggs had already spoken three-quarters of an hour and was still warming up. The break must come soon.

It did. A few old ladies, subject to headache, got up nervously and tottered away. Members of Adelphi pled with them to wait for the rest of the program, but they would not be persuaded. In another ten minutes a dozen visitors had tiptoed out. Boggs had reached his final height and was gradually running down. Human strength had found its limitations. But he was coming down, slowly and easily cruising from cloud to cloud, and discussing religion, philosophy and literature

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in fine but scrambled language. The audience was melting rapidly now. The cheering had stopped, but Boggs hadn't, though the pale chairman pulled at his coat every time he could reach him.

Not over half the visitors were left. The moment of triumph had arrived. Quietly and with regret plastered deep over our faces Chub and I got up and oozed cautiously down the aisle. From various parts of the room other Gnothautians arose and picked their way delicately to freedom. In their wake the rest of the visitors came — some quietly, some with every evidence of undue anxiety. And as we crowded through the anteroom Boggs thundered on.

There were scandalous rumors next day about that open meeting. It was hinted that the Adelphians not only stopped Boggs by violence but that they took him down in the washroom and ducked him before they left for home. I don't believe this, because Adelphi always had a reverence for oratory and had been noted for its encouragement. But Boggs did leave Adelphi and soon afterward

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presented his application to Gnothautii. We took him in, but were firm with him and eventually made a fine speaker of him.

What pleased us most with the whole affair was that, mad and disgusted as Adelphi was over their ruined meeting, they couldn't blame any one but themselves, and didn't attempt to. In fact, they kept so quiet about it that we had to chase an Adelphian a long way during the next two years before we could even mention the subject of open meetings.

VI

THE WONDERFUL GRABBENHEIM

I'm disgusted with the world this morning. It's a nice old mud ball, but it needs to be kerosened. It has become badly infested with men. I'm one of them, not much worse than the rest — pretty ordinarily decent, in fact — and what did I do this morning? In rushes Mangler, whom I haven't seen for five years. He was one of my most loyal followers in college — voted for me for president of the freshman class, got nine hash club votes for me for treasurer of the athletic association, and wanted to send me to Congress. He admired me, Mangler did. He was always following me around, wanting to do things for me. And yesterday he rushed in with his hands out and I grabbed them and yelled, "Suffering cats, who left the barn door open?" and "Hello, you goggle-eyed pirate," and other pet names, and was as

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glad to see him as if he had had cholera ; because there was a directors' meeting in seven minutes and I had a luncheon date with a big customer and four days' work to pack into the afternoon, and my wife had at last made me promise by the holes in Ole Skjarsen's sweater — my most sacred oath — to harness up that evening and go over to the Van Bumptiouses for dinner.

Why couldn't he have come any other day in the year ? But he couldn't, and he was going out that evening and was never coming back, as far as he knew, and while I gabbled along feverishly and tried to tell him what a national calamity it was that everything had stacked up that day and couldn't he stay over and wouldn't he have five cigars anyway and smoke them all at once, and, by Jove, that directors' meeting was due and could he drop around for half an hour from 4:32 to 5:02 — while I was spilling all this old Mangler kept getting quieter and quieter and more uneasy and lonely around the eyes. He was perfectly polite and pleasant, but he didn't come back in the afternoon and I know what he thinks of me. Thank

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heaven, he's not as imaginative as I am. He doesn't think half as badly of me as I do of myself.

G'r'r! This day tastes like assafoetida. We're all miserable, ungrateful mollusks. Man is made of forgetfulness, with a little hide stretched around it. Why, even back at school, when we manufactured a man once and he rose to fame and became the leading scholar of the college, what did he do? Just what any real man would have done. He forgot us. He threw us down. He pretty near ruined us. He was our greatest calamity. We didn't use any ungratefulness when we made him, but he had a streak of it in him as broad as a boulevard.

Grabbenheim his name was, curse him. We didn't intend to make him. It was just another of those fool, careless ideas which get into college boys' heads and grow like a fungus. Grabbenheim was a joke to begin with. Most all the roads to the gallows begin with a joke. But he shouldn't have been ungrateful for all that. Lord, what we did for that man!

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Allie Bangs invented Grabbenheim. But it wasn't his fault. He didn't mean anything by it. He couldn't possibly have foreseen that the fellow would grow up and shame us. It was just a thoughtless piece of deviltry, and if Professor Wogg, our mathematics professor, hadn't been so near-sighted and generally oblivious to life and its little unimportant details nothing would have come of it. Allie just did it to amuse the class anyway. And goodness knows we needed amusement in Wogg's classes. Amusement wasn't all we got out of it, by any means!

It was in our sophomore year and twelve of us were preparing to wade nervously through calculus under Wogg. We didn't take calculus because we loved it. We had no more use for it than it had for us. The class was a sort of little back-water eddy into which most of us had drifted through conflicts in our class schedules. We had to take calculus to get our hours in. We would rather have taken quinine, but the faculty wouldn't give us credits for it. And so we took calculus and resigned ourselves to the fact that with our natural

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talents we would probably be able to amuse ourselves during the year with fair success.

Professor Wogg had had most of us the year before, and my heart aches for him now, though at the time I was selfish and never thought of his sufferings while trying to alleviate my own. Professor Wogg was about as exciting as two million square miles of sand, but there was no monotony about us. Life was always one harrowing nightmare of uncertainty for him. Well I remember the day when Wilbur Hogboom broke up a few chairs in the back row one morning and made a bonfire, it being cold, and how Professor Wogg raved while he tried to remember Hogboom's name in order to fire him out beyond the solar system and tell him never to come back.

Remembering names and faces was Wogg's greatest trial. No, that is a mistake. He didn't try at all. He'd given up long ago. He was so near-sighted that he could hardly see to put on his glasses, and all students looked alike to him. When he made up his roll in the fall he would ask for all the A's and then all the B's and take our

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names alphabetically. Then he would call on us from his roll book, and the man who was reciting meant no more to him than a dim, misty shape with a name to it — any old name. And if he got a good mark opposite the wrong name or a flunk opposite the star scholar's name, that was all "rub of the green," as we say now.

On the first day of the winter semester that year Wogg made us up into a roll and when he had finished he peered out through those bull's-eye glasses of his and asked: "Have I overlooked anyone?" And quick as a flash Allie Bangs answered: "Mr. Grabbenheim." Some of us laughed at the joke, but the professor didn't catch it, and he marked down "Mr. Grabbenheim" with great care after asking Allie how he spelled it and pretty nearly flooring him.

We didn't think any more of it. It was only a minor incident in a class where whist parties were a regular diversion in the back row. But two days later Professor Wogg paralyzed us by asking Mr. Grabbenheim to put the thirteenth problem on the board for the benefit of the class. It was a great

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joke and Allie had about decided to explain that Mr. Grabbenheim had been called to Turkey in Asia by the death of his family when Keg Rearick solemnly got up and put the problem on the board.

This was very funny and we hurt ourselves choking down our amusement while Keg explained the work and the professor said: "Very good, indeed, Mr. Grabbenheim." After class we had a lot of fun over it, and two days later, when Grabbenheim's name was called again, one of the boys who was up on that part of the lesson recited without a break. Grabbenheim was making a great record in calculus.

A few days later seven members of the class flunked in a row over a peculiarly criminal problem, and then Grabbenheim's name was called. Noddy Pierce was the only man in the class prepared and he got up and sailed right through. Professor Wogg was delighted.

"I want to compliment Mr. Grabbenheim before the class," he said, beaming. "He seems to be here for business and he is making an excellent

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record. That was splendidly done, Mr. Grabbenheim."

After class we held a little meeting and decided that with such prospects Grabbenheim ought to live. It would be a shame to cut him down at the beginning of so brilliant a career. Besides, it wouldn't be a bad plan to have a scholar in the class. So we decided that whoever knew the part of the lesson which was assigned to Grabbenheim was to recite it, and Grabby started out on his dazzling course.

In a month Grabbenheim was the sensation of the class. He had never fallen down on a recitation. This was only natural, since any one of us who knew the problem would get up and recite for him. He had never failed to put a problem on the board and explain it to the perfect satisfaction of every one. Old Woggs was delighted. It was dreary work for him, trying to insert a diaphanous suspicion of the rudiments of higher mathematics into a lot of otherwise occupied heads, and when he got a real scholar he was as happy as a child with a new toy. It was pretty hard on

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our two or three good scholars, because they had to watch out for Grabbenheim and their own marks, too, and it kept them on edge all the time. Moreover, every time a man recited for Grabbenheim he had to flunk for himself, for fear Professor Wogg would suddenly return to earth and wonder how two men could occupy the same chair at the same time. But we pointed out to them that the honor of the class was at stake. We had a star in Grabbenheim and it would never do to desert him. They were loyal boys and had big hearts and they saw the point—all but Simpkins. Everything would have been easy if Simpkins hadn't gotten jealous.

I never saw such a fellow as Simpkins, anyway. He was always kicking and objecting. There was no class spirit in him at all. He thought exclusively of himself. When the marks came out at the end of the second month Grabbenheim led the class by an enormous plurality, and what did Simpkins do but up and insurgé. He had always been a good scholar and he couldn't bear to see anyone beat him. He declined to recite for Grabbenheim

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any longer. More than that, he threatened to expose him.

Think of having to worry along in college with an ingrowing disposition like that. We were furious. We met Simpkins casually after literary society meeting and took him out to a clay quarry half full of the dampest water you ever saw. Then we talked to him like brothers. We pleaded with him not to risk his noble young life by contracting pneumonia from getting soaked in that water. And we pointed out just how this was certain to occur accidentally if he exposed Grabbenheim. That settled the exposure business — both kinds of exposures; but from that time Simpkins was a mortal enemy of Grabbenheim's. Twice he got up to recite for Grabbenheim and failed miserably. We had to take him out to the quarry again and plead with him some more. And at mid-term examination we barely headed off an atrocious plot. We had all contributed to Grabby's examination paper, and Pierce wrote it in a beautiful back hand. It was perfect, but just as Pierce was laying it on the professor's desk, nicely hidden under

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his own, he noticed the name on top of the pile already there. The top paper was Grabbenheim's. That pup Simpkins had written it. Pierce managed to get away with it, and say — Grabbenheim would have come out zero minus on that examination. He had worked everything out with the logarithm 41144.

When the marks were announced Grabbenheim stood higher than any man had ever stood in calculus before, and Simp was a very poor second. This pleased us so much that we decided to enlarge Grabby's sphere of action and let him see a little real college life. Sooner or later the faculty would begin to notice him and it would be all off, of course. But while Grabby lived we meant to have him enjoy himself. We were going to give the poor chap every chance to rise, and if that chump Simpkins stabbed him in the back he would have to answer to us, that was all. No homeless, parentless stranger was going to get the worst of it while we were alive to defend him. The rest of the class swore as one man to cherish Grabbenheim and see him through the semester.

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It was hard work, because we all had to dig in and get some slight, murky inkling of what calculus was about in order to protect Grabby's record. But we didn't flinch. When an American college boy sees his duty he does it even if he has to wrap a wet towel about his head and study until the gas meter faints from exhaustion. Night after night we figured our way through mathematical jungles, yelling with pain whenever we struck a particularly insane collision of signs and symbols. We would toil until the room went round and round. And then we would sit back and plan Grabby's career, and puzzle over new ways of making him famous, and quarrel over the precise shade of disposition which he should possess, and what his religion was, and whether or not he should be interested in girls or go into politics. Then we would go to class the next day and fight for the honor of getting up and Grabbenheiming. It got so that there were sometimes as many as three Grabbenheims on the floor at once trying to recite. Anyone but Wogg would have suspected. But he just rubbed his hands and oiled us all over with

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praise. Never have I heard sweeter words than I heard once or twice after I had recited for Grabby, and Professor Wogg said: "Ah, again, Mr. Grabbenheim, a perfect recitation. You are a pleasure to me, my dear boy — a positive pleasure."

My! how it pleased me to be a pleasure to my professors — for once — even under an assumed name.

We got so ambitious for Grabby that we entered him at the registrar's office in English lit. and Latin prose composition. Not that we expected him to do anything with those studies. In fact, he ignored the classes altogether and began to get faculty notices for cuts. But we didn't care about that. In fact, it pleased us, because at the end of the term the faculty would have before it the task of firing the best mathematics scholar who ever came to Siwash because he had flunked in two other studies, and it warmed our hearts to think of the trouble it would have deciding the puzzle — particularly if it tried to talk things over with Grabbenheim personally.

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In the spring we began introducing Grabbenheim to the campus. Rearick wrote a few verses in his very best vein and sent them into the college paper under Grabbenheim's name. We got the athletic association president to appoint him on a couple of committees. We fed the college reporters for the weekly with personals about Grabbenheim until the sheet was saturated with him. He had gone home to Chicago to see his sick mother. He was absent in Omaha considering a fine position which had just been offered him. He was attending a conference at Kiowa. People began to ask who this Grabbenheim chap was. But nobody seemed to know. Most of us thought he was a junior, but we hadn't met him. He was very exclusive, we had heard — he had a title over in Russia and had come away to avoid the nihilists or something of the sort. Pity he didn't mix more with the fellows.

About April we didn't have time to do much of anything besides arranging Grabby's career. He got busier and busier. Bangs cribbed an article on Russian social conditions from somewhere and

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entered it in the sophomore essay competition. It was so good that the faculty held meetings about it and tried to find Grabby in order to encourage him. We dug out a musician with a very foreign accent from one of the musical comedy orchestras, got him all cleaned up and polished and sent him around the campus inquiring for "Meestair Grabbenheim." We had some cards printed and Grabbenheim left one at Browning Hall one evening for the dean of women when she was away. The dear woman was all fussed up about it when she returned. She had heard of him. One of our greatest triumphs came when Rearick persuaded a wrestler who had blown into town hunting for a match to impersonate Grabbenheim and go into the college gymnasium to get measured for the anthropo-poanthric — hang it all, you know the kind of a chart I mean — that word that trots in the middle and gets you all mixed up. Anyhow, the wrestler went through the measurements and the strength tests and broke the college record — that is, Grabby did. There was a lot of excitement about it when the director announced it.

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Grabby promised to come out for the hammer throw, and the correspondents for the Chicago papers spent a week trying to locate him and get his picture. But they couldn't find him. You never saw such a reserved cuss.

Grabbenheim was now a real college character and we swelled all out of shape with pride when the Mu Kow Moos, who didn't have any member in the calculus class, began to scout around for a chance to rush him. Still we weren't satisfied. Every night some of us met to discuss Grabby and improve him and hang some new and startling ornament on his record or disposition. Once we almost made him over altogether into a German officer in exile for fighting a duel. Pierce fought hard for it, but we voted him down. But we did consent to run him for office. This was another pet dream of Pierce's. He declined to be happy until Grabbenheim had been elected to some college office and had had an affair with a girl. Working up a love affair for a man who existed only in the disordered brains of a few disorderly sophomores was too much of a job for us. But we thought we

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could manage the election, and so we finally picked out a place on the executive committee of the spring athletic dance and put Grabbenheim up for it.

Pierce pulled it off in fine shape at the class meeting. He rose, he explained, to do a peculiar thing. He wanted to nominate a man whom most of the class had never seen — the best mathematician who had ever come to Siwash — a man of noble and distinguished bearing — a future king of athletes and a defender of the old school on many a field — but a man so shy and reserved that it had seemed impossible to drag him out into college life. He was about to nominate Aloysius Grabbenheim (“Sergius, you fool,” Bangs whispered frantically) as a member of the committee for the sophomore class. The honor might encourage him to mingle. Though he would probably decline, it would show him that Siwash hearts beat warmly for him, etc.—gurgle, gurgle, gush. Pierce was a great little jam-spreader and the class ate it all up. It elected Grabbenheim, though Simpkins made a frantic speech against honoring an unknown who didn’t have interest enough to

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get acquainted around the campus. Simpkins almost burst over the performance, but he was kind. Oh, how kind Simpkins was. He held Grabbenheim's fate in the hollow of his hand. At any minute he might have exposed him and annihilated him, but did he do it? No, indeed. Simpkins was a real man — he refrained. The water in that clay quarry was awfully cold that spring.

Grabby's election produced a tremendous sensation around college. The whole school resolved itself into a committee to find him and drag him triumphantly forth. And we twelve parents of his resolved ourselves into an equally determined committee to protect him from the rude public and keep his privacy sacred. For a day we succeeded. Then the chase got too hot. When the calculus class convened it had seven visitors from other classes and Pierce had to get up when Grabby was called upon and explain that he had been summoned to Chicago on an important mission connected with his country.

That saved us for a few days, but we realized that we had overdone things. Like many other

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fond and ambitious parents we had pushed our child ahead too fast. He was ruined. Either we must kill him or allow the college to clasp its yearning arms around the thin, unsatisfactory air of which he was composed. Anyway, we were exhausted. It kept us busy day and night running him. Of course, it was good for our calculus, but our baseball and track work and fussing campaigns were getting all shot to pieces. We finally decided to let Grabby accept the office and run things along until the athletic dance. In the meanwhile something might happen. Perhaps there would be a train wreck and Grabby might break a leg. Anyway, we hoped for the best.

In the meantime the one question on the campus was: Would Mr. Grabbenheim accept? Would he condescend to become acquainted? Bangs had taken the job of retailing the rumors concerning Grabbenheim's wealth and refinement. He had a good imagination and he worked it to the limit. By Friday of that week Grabby had become a grand duke in disguise, and when a letter from Chicago with a Russian crest on it reached the class

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president twenty trembling hands helped him open it at the bulletin board, where it had been posted.

We had wired Snoddy Smith of last year's class, who was toiling upward in Chicago at that time, to put us up a nice letter. Cost us \$1.97 to explain it to him at night rates. Snoddy certainly did well. Don't know where he dug up the letter paper, but it was paralyzing. Plain, you know, but oh, so refined. Mr. Grabbenheim from the bottom of his heart thanked his classmates, whom he hoped some day to know, for the honor conferred upon him (did he presume in believing the college paper which he had just read before his departure?). Mr. Grabbenheim wished that he might accept, but ah, dear friends, your strange customs, your strange but delightful customs — he could not hope to get hep — here the president stopped and looked at the letter for a long time, while we cursed Snoddy under our breaths and swore that if he queered the game by his foolishness we'd get revenge if it took a lifetime — to get hep to social usages at that dear old Siwash College. How could he accept, knowing so little?

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Ah, no, dear friends, but a lifetime of gratitude.
As we say in Russia ——

Then followed a row of jackstones and some splashes which looked so Russian that even I got a little bit dizzy. Snoddy was certainly rising to the occasion. But, the letter went on, Mr. Grabbenheim, who has not thus far claimed the delight of knowing personally his comrades in the pursuit of all wisdom, would count it a privilege and an honor to attend the ball ——

There was more, but that was enough. All present immediately gave three cheers. Grabbenheim, the mystery, was about to emerge. We, the sophomores, would spring him on a dazzled college. We, the sophomores, were the people by a terrific majority, and who dared deny it?

Grabbenheim was the only subject of conversation for the next few days. Everybody knew all about him now. He was enrolled in lit. and Latin composition, but never attended. Mathematics seemed to be his only interest. He was said to be wonderful in calculus. What did he look like? We answered a thousand questions that week ——

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that is, we side-stepped them. He was all very well, we explained, too quiet, but oh, so — you know. Wait until the athletic dance. And meantime the sale of tickets soared and soared. Grabby was again performing a great college service. He was breaking the record for receipts, and, goodness knows, the baseball team needed the money.

About that time another letter came from Smith. It didn't come to us, but to Miss Andrews of the senior class, and ten minutes after she opened it the whole school knew about it. Count Grabbenheim had asked her for the honor of a dance. We saw through it in a minute. Snoddy was getting a little service out of Grabby himself. He and Miss Andrews were engaged and he was simply heaping a little honor on her in his usually reckless and imprudent way. Oh, well, we owed something to him, anyway. He had helped us out nobly.

But that same day letters came to Miss King, Miss Sennett and Miss Claire, all good friends of Miss Andrews and sorority sisters. Then they ceased coming. The Kappa Kap Pajamas had four requests for dances, while the Kappa Alpha

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Pussicats and the others were ignored. This was carrying things into politics. Snoddy was acting as if he owned Grabbenheim. But, after all, it wasn't our funeral. Grabby wasn't going to show up and the Kappa Kaps would sit out those dances. Reckless of Snoddy. Very reckless.

I am not entirely sure of what happened next, because just then things seemed to go around and around for several days. I had asked Miss Wilmoughby, a perfectly beautiful two-stepper from Kansas City, to go with me to the dance and she had consented. Four days before it came off she wrote and begged to be excused. She hardly knew, she said, how to explain except that she had had a previous engagement, and that she had supposed it broken and that she had found it wasn't, and she knew I would understand, and wouldn't I be nice about taking a lot of dances, and she wanted me to be nice to her escort, who was a stranger in the class — in fact, it was Count Grabbenheim.

When I came to later I was gnawing contentedly at fragments of the furniture. Never had I been so mad. I had eaten quite a meal of raw

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chair legs before I was calm enough to rush off to Pierce for comfort. But Pierce was madder than I. Furniture didn't satisfy his feelings. He was chewing the radiator. My affair with Miss Willoughby was just a mild little thing of a month's standing, and I really had her successor in mind, but old Noddy had been clean and everlastingly gone to smash on Helena Toothby, the queen of our class — and Helena had just turned him down and broken her engagement — because an old friend who had no acquaintance in the college had thrown himself on her mercy and she felt it her duty to go with him to the dance.

Noddy and I leaned on each other for a while and fought for language — but not for long. Keg Rearick kicked the door in presently. Keg was past all such mild diversions as dining on anything. He was about to dissolve into high explosives. Amy Landeville had been tossing him up playfully and catching him as he came down for some months and had consented to go to the ball with him as a great favor. Keg was entirely devastated about her — terrible case — and she had

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just written, breaking her engagement for the party in great indignation — because she had passed him that day and he had been too busy looking the other way to notice her.

We three threw water on each other and put two and two together — thank heaven, this was no calculus problem. And then we went to telegraph Snoddy, promising him instant death at the earliest possible moment. But on the way we met Walls and Etherton, and when we saw their wild look we seized their hands and asked: “Brothers, did you get it, too?” And they said they had. So we made up a Roman mob and charged the telegraph office, where we composed a message which had to be revised four times before the operator would take it. We didn’t do the subject justice then, but our money gave out. So we sent it on to that skulking coward in Chicago who had taken our own child and had ruined us with him, and went home to dine on more furniture.

I got a reply in the morning. It was short but fairly explicit. It read: “I see you’re crazy,

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but explain further. Never wrote said girls. Some one else is using your Grabbenheim."

That day we five and Andrews and Pudge Bigelow, who had also received the dull, destructive drop from their best young lady friends, met in the library, it being the most secret place we could find, and composed a grisly and horrible oath by which we swore to have revenge on Grabbenheim and other persons as yet unknown to the jury. Self-preservation, if nothing else, demanded it. Heaven knows what the miscreant who had stolen our hero would do with him. He might produce him, and then where would we be? Imagine us, the parents of great Mr. Grabbenheim, gnawing our thumbs in the corner while some rank outsider trotted him about the ballroom floor with a retinue of seven of our best girls following him and gobbling up the result's of a year's hard work. No, sir-ee. Grabbenheim had betrayed us. What we proposed to do to Grabbenheim would curdle the coldest blood. Only — what was it?

We sat around the library until Miss Hawkes, the librarian, became suspicious, never having seen

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us there before. But it wasn't until late afternoon that we found the plan. Then it all dawned at once like a beautiful sunrise. It was an inspiration — the idea of a lifetime.

Grabby would wreck the chemical laboratory. In so doing he would fill a long-felt want. We had been yearning to do it ever since we had had freshman chemistry. But we hadn't dared. It had been a popular diversion in years past, but had been overdone, and that year the faculty had served notice that any person found spilling sulphuric acid around the building and mixing up compounds that smelled to yon high heaven would not only be expelled but indicted by the grand jury for malicious mischief. So we had suffered all year. Heavens, how we had suffered in that class. Professor Grubb was a fiend incarnate for piling up work and trouble and conditions. And now we would get even. Grabby would pile up the chemistry room for us.

We plotted fiercely all that night. The dance was only three days away and time was short. The next day Pierce and I disappeared from our

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accustomed haunts in the afternoon. We had with us tools and a lunch. The old main building stands open until six and it wasn't hard for us to ramble casually up to the third floor without meeting anyone and insert ourselves into Professor Wogg's room. The old main building has little octagonal towers all over it, and these towers open into some of the classrooms. They are too small to be used for anything by the college, but we students found them very convenient, indeed. In the big mock election in my senior year we locked four Republicans in these tower closets, and by the time we remembered to let them out there was some question as to whether they needed fresh air or a coroner the most.

Pierce and I bade good-by to the outside world and wedged ourselves into one of the tower rooms. It was just large enough for a vest for a fat man, and the air in it had spoiled years ago. It seemed seven hours until the janitor came to sweep out, and a week and a half until the light from the little window faded and we knew that night had come. We were wet with sweat and the dust had caked

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all over us, but we hadn't flinched. Red Indians could take fancy lessons in revenge from us.

It was no trick at all to get out of Professor Wogg's room and into the chemical laboratory. The locks were up to date, but the doors weren't. They cut like cheese. It was just nine o'clock when we finally stood before our prey, and the moonlight filtering through the big narrow-paned windows made it unnecessary to use lights.

I was almost grateful to Grabbenheim for that evening. It made up for all of the year before. How we enjoyed ourselves! I had cut laboratory work with all the fervor of my young being when I was a freshman, but I never found anything more fascinating than the experiments which we carried on that night. It only goes to show that if professors were human and allowed their students a little latitude they would make even the driest subject interesting.

We worked mostly with acids. They are so satisfactory. We mixed them all together and poured them wherever they would do the most good. We burned villainous remarks on the wall paper. We

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used litmus paper by the bale and test tubes by the barrel. When we got tired of acids we went in for smells. The smells we discovered were superb. I smelled a lot of them the second day I was on the ocean last year — just at meal time. They were yellowish-brownish green smells that tie your stomach up in a knot and wring it out like a towel.

We put chunks of potassium in all the water pots and stuck the professor's record book into a huge bowl of hydronitro-sulphuric acid to soak. Then we tip-toed out, carrying large beakers of the smelly triumphs we had produced and hurling them over the transoms into the other rooms. But before we went, being somewhat hurried, we dropped a clue. It was a foolish thing to do, but criminals always do it. No matter how careful you are when committing crime you are always bound to leave some damaging evidence. We dropped ours right on the professor's desk, where he would be sure to find it. It was a handkerchief all stained with acid. And it had a name embroidered in the corner. Why on earth do men, especially reckless

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men, have their names embroidered on their handkerchiefs? This one would have been our ruin, only the name was "Grabbenheim."

We left a bunch of keys in a cabinet, too. There was a metal tag on the ring with the name "Grabbenheim" on it. Cost us 50 cents to have an old locksmith stamp that name the afternoon before. And down on the campus when we had slipped quietly out and had unostentatiously oozed into the shrubbery about four seconds after the night watch had turned the corner we left a hat. It is often done by men who are in a great hurry. And of course there is nothing so damning as a hat with the owner's name in it. Grabby shouldn't have decorated all his personal property with his full name. "G." would have been quite sufficient.

We slept late the next morning and wandered peacefully down into pandemonium instead of chapel. The college was buzzing like a hornets' nest just before the order to fire at random is given. The faculty was unanimously absent. It was meeting in executive session. Every few minutes

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it was sending out a new request that Mr. Grabbenheim appear before it immediately. The deputy sheriff was also looking for Mr. Grabbenheim. His popularity of the day before was as nothing beside his extreme desirability just then. People who had never heard of him before simply ached to get hold of him. I believe old Professor Grubb would have given a year of his life to have been allowed to converse with Grabbenheim for just a minute — with a meat ax.

As for the students, of course, the feelings were pretty well mixed. It was generally conceded that Grabby had done a noble and gallant deed, but that he had displayed unusual grumminess of intellect in the details. That was laid up of course to the fact that he was but a poor, dumb foreigner, unacquainted with our customs. But he had done his best, and there was great regret over the whole unfortunate affair — I mean the clues. The most heartrending regret was displayed by seven young ladies for whom some of us had once had a tender regard. Never had I seen such passionate and despairing regret. Some of them wept openly.

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At ten o'clock the faculty expelled Grabbenheim by a unanimous vote and exhorted the sheriff to capture him, dead or alive. Professor Wogg held out for mercy to the last. It almost broke his heart to lose Grabbenheim, but, as he had often complained, mathematics stood little show in this impractical world and genius got no consideration. I don't believe he has ever quite recovered from the blow, and he still quotes Grabbenheim's marks, I am told.

That afternoon most of us seven got notes from the young ladies who had dumped us overboard with such regret two days before. The notes were absurdly friendly. They were notes we would have given a great deal to have received a week before, but somehow they were merely painful at that time. Our faith in womankind was gone. We were embittered men. We went to the athletic dance, but we staggled it and stood for the most part in the corners, looking scornfully on at the proceedings. We could hardly condescend to dance with any woman, guilty or innocent.

Only one of the several girls appeared. Miss

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Toothby came in late — with Simpkins. He had been asking her to various affairs steadily for nearly two years, but she had always had previous engagements. When they came in Pierce gave an awful start and remained absorbed in thought for some minutes. Then he looked at me. I looked back. Then we both looked at Simpkins. Then simultaneously something within us swelled up and burst into an awful and corrosive wrath. Dunder-noodles that we were! Why hadn't we suspected Simpkins before?

No, we never entirely got even with Simpkins. He still lives.

VII

KETTLES AND BELLS

Thanks, Jim, you may keep the war section. I don't care to read it. Just pass me over the Sports and Household Economics and Advice to the Love-loony and the colored-hash sections, please. I'll try to worry through a rainy Sunday with them.

No, I'm not trying to abash the belligerents by ignoring them. And I'm not one of those peaceful Priscillas who are trying to protect the United States by proving that war is too horrible to think about. As a matter of fact, I'm a war fan. I know just how many yards France made through the center last month, and I can pronounce Przemysl without artificial aid. On week days, when the news comes from the front, I meet the carrier boy a block from the house and ask in grieved tones what delayed him; but on Sundays,

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when the diplomats and rear-guard experts quarrel all over the news section trying to decide who threw the first gas bomb, and whether or not submarines fire in self-defense, and who shot first,—the children or the soldiers,—and what nation started the rumpus, anyway, my brain softens early in the day and I have to rest up on the baseball averages.

Fixing the responsibility is too big a job for a man of my limited statesmanship. I prefer to wait a few decades until the evidence has simmered down into more coherence. I have had a prejudice against fixing responsibilities ever since I was a humble plodder after wisdom in college and watched the faculty go about its regular and unending job of discovering who had dislocated the peace.

It was a conscientious faculty. It was paid for fixing responsibilities, along with other duties, and it did its duty. We knew whenever a few of us met at some obscure hour to tamper with the college plant that the faculty would meet the next day and fix the responsibility. Knowing this more

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perfectly than we ever knew our lessons, we always took care to fix the evidence before we went home. That made everything safe and comfortable and full of the most invigorating surprises for somebody else.

When an earnest young Y. M. C. A. worker had studied that non-existent phenomenon known as political economy until he had gone to sleep with his face in the book, and then had been called up the next day to explain to the faculty why he was out late the night before painting the Siwash cheer on the chapel front in pink and purple, the experience broadened him. He stopped tottering along after old Adam Smith and hustled out to obtain an alibi.

Then the faculty had not only conclusive evidence in the shape of the student's hat left behind in his flight with his name in it,— we always borrowed a few hats and things for evidence,— but it had an alibi which couldn't be broken with a pickax.

Nothing irritates a faculty so much as to have plenty of evidence and alibis at the same time.

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The alibis seemed to irritate ours the most. It got to regard the alibis with perfect aversion. It almost seemed to consider them as an accessory after the fact.

You'd think a faculty would be pleased and grateful to discover spotless innocence in a suspect, but it never was. This was because it had to go to work and fix the responsibility all over again. I don't blame the faculty. Fixing responsibilities gets to be an awful bore.

Our faculty worked a week on the bunch of clues we left behind when we blew up the old chapel piano, which had forgotten how to make music twenty years before — and the trail led them straight to the minister of the First Methodist Church. They had to apologize for themselves and for the clues too. Believe me, as old Thomas Moore was fond of saying, I don't care to fix any responsibilities. It's enough trouble to direct them — too much, sometimes, and dangerous in the bargain. Take the time we stole the famous sugar-kettle from Kiowa College.

The Kiowa sugar-kettle? Of course you

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haven't heard of it. No one would have heard of it if the Kiowa students hadn't made such fools of themselves over the thing. It originally belonged to old Stephen Boggus, an early settler. It cost Eli Yale a few hundred pounds of nails, some old books, and a little cash to get his name into history on a reinforced-concrete foundation, but Boggus slipped in cheaper than that. He won enduring fame by giving Kiowa ten fat pigs, a quarter-section of land planted to thistles, and his household goods, including a sugar-kettle which was big enough to hold the student body of that time.

The college promptly sold the pigs, rented the land and forgot the kettle. Years afterwards some senior class dug it out of the basement of the old main building, twined a tradition around it and used it in their class-day exercises.

You know how a tradition spreads if you don't pour formaldehyde on it. Well, the old Boggus kettle grew in importance from year to year until it was considered more precious than most of the college buildings. Each year some gifted prevaricator in the senior class wrote a new tradition

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about it, and by our day it had acquired a history which would have done credit to *Old Ironsides*. It had served through the Mexican War. Old Boggus had hidden from the Indians under it. The president of the college had saved the library during the flood by loading it in the kettle and floating it down the stream; soup had been boiled in it for the Prince of Wales and his party when they visited Illinois. Abraham Lincoln had stood on it to make an Abolition speech. The college had pawned it in the starvation days for enough to buy cornmeal for the faculty.

Each spring a new story more ridiculous than the last was turned out. The Chicago papers printed them. Magazine writers came and embroidered the stories, and students entered Kiowa in the hope that some day they might be senior marshals and lead the solemn procession escorting this battered old fraud to the stage. Kiowa used to get a column on its class-day exercises in the city papers, all on account of this fool kettle, while we were cut off with a few inches.

It was disgusting. We were sober, earnest folk

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at Siwash. We had no childish superstitions, and we did not worship idols. On our class day we went up on the roof of the college building with decent and beautiful ceremonies and tolled off the age of the college — ten more years than Kiowa could boast — in strokes on our dear old bell. Our bell was worth honoring, because it had hung in the belfry for seventy-five years and had been brought overland from New England. There were hundreds of splendid traditions about it, but not a newspaper would touch them.

In my sophomore year we got so tired of hearing about Kiowa's sugar-kettle that we decided to relieve the public from any further traditions. We thought that if a few of us were to go over to Kiowa on a dark night we might persuade the kettle to follow us home. We intended to have a bell celebration that year which would jam its way into the headlines whether the news editors knew a college from a crayfish or not. The bell was going to ring the seventy-fifth-anniversary strokes, and the governor of the State was scheduled to make some remarks about bells and education and,

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in an indirect way, upon the necessity of standing by a good man and keeping him firmly imprisoned in office. We had advertised this celebration until it was as familiar to the readers of the State as breakfast food, and we figured that if we could use the Kiowa kettle that day for a waste-basket or garbage-can, it might provide a little innocent pleasure for the giddy young freshmen — not that we cared a prune for the kettle ourselves; we merely wished to scatter sunshine while we might.

Kiowa was only fifteen miles from Siwash.

We hired a team and wagon, and one dark, rainy Sunday night early in June, four of us jogged over to Hatfield, the town which was afflicted with Kiowa College. There were Noddy Pierce, Keg Rearick, Ole Skjarsen and myself. We took Ole along because he was such a handy substitute for a derrick. He was lacking in diplomacy and finesse at times, but if you attached him to any large object and asked him as a favor to hoist, he hoisted with a persistence and success which were perfectly beautiful.

We also took a few boards and rollers and crow-

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bars, some gunny-sacking to throw over the kettle, and a little scientific instrument which is not used much in our best families. It was what our earnest old philosophy professor would have called a "James," and it is a very convenient household utensil at times. When you put one end of a James under the window and bear down on the other, you can open the said window without troubling the owner of the premises to come and undo the lock for you from the inside; and if there was anything we desired that night, it was to avoid troubling anyone connected with Kiowa College.

The roads were deep and clung to us with loving embraces. But we worried through and came to anchor at the rear of the campus about ten o'clock. It was a dark, lonely campus at best, being overgrown with trees and in the edge of town, but that night it looked like the thickest part of a particularly dense tunnel. Still, being quiet by nature and particularly averse to society at that time, we did not feel as if we could complain. We located the library where the kettle was exhibited and began operations.

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Getting into the library was too easy. I climbed up on Ole Skjarsen's platform-like back with my scientific instrument and opened a window with one creak and a crack. A minute later I let the expedition in through the back door. By the light of a few matches, we located the sacred bosh-producer on its pedestal, and Ole had just rolled up his sleeves and given a few preliminary warming-up grunts, when we distinctly heard footsteps on the stairs leading to the second story.

They were being produced with much firmness and some rapidity, and they were coming our way. In a minute they would be in our midst. We pulled our wet caps over our faces and flattened ourselves against the wall beside the staircase. Then the electric lights went on, and the owner of the footsteps poked his head around the corner. As he did so, Rearick and Ole covered him carefully with about eight square yards of burlap and twisted the ends neatly around his waist, while I turned out the lights.

Sounds and struggles which indicated an enormous amount of ill-feeling came from within the

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burlap. Apparently we had lost the esteem of the person within. Still, this did not grieve us. We couldn't expect to be universally popular. We left Ole to hold the bundle and hunted for some safe place to store a medium-sized and very angry man. Near the stairs there was a sort of washroom, unconnected with the outside universe except by a little window very high up. A prisoner might address the world at large for days from within here without causing any comment. So we unwrapped our captive, because we needed the burlap, dumped him in the washroom and locked the door. Then we turned on the lights again and went back to work with the noble feelings of men who had met trouble and had not become soured or discouraged.

You wouldn't have thought that any small room could have held so much fuss as that guest of ours in the washroom made. He was a prize package of pandemonium, and his vocabulary was wonderful. It was a pleasure to listen to it. He was no common janitor, apparently. As he raged on, handling the most complicated conversation with

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ease and outlining our future in seven-syllabled words, we began to suspect that he was no janitor at all. A janitor couldn't have produced those words without choking on the pronunciation. It aroused our curiosity.

"Who are you, anyway?" asked Rearick, going up close to the door.

"I am the president of this college," came the answer in muffled tones. "And it shall be my sacred duty to see that you become wards of the commonwealth at some penal institution—"

"Gosh," whispered Rearick, coming away impolitely while the answer was still in full cry. "Boys, we've got a real live president in there. This is serious." It was that. In our most desperate dreams we had never planned to lock a college president up in a washroom. Of course, at college we had discovered that a faculty is at least partly human, but we had never gotten over our awe of Prexy. He was beyond ordinary laws and forces. His knowledge began half a library ahead of where ours stopped, utterly exhausted. It was beyond our simple understanding, and we glorified

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in it. If this had been our prexy, he would have been walking out over our willing necks long before this.

And yet this was a president kicking on the door like a mere man and burning out his entire vocabulary. It was disgusting. He had no repose whatever. Anyway, what was he doing mooning around the library on Sunday night? No reputable person would infest a library at such a time. We were shocked at the whole business. The best thing we could do would be to take our kettle and go away at once before we contracted bad habits.

We laid our profane hands on the kettle. Then Rearick called time. He was beginning to think. When Rearick thinks, on an informal occasion like this, something uncanny is sure to happen. He leaned his head on his hand and fermented away inside for a minute.

"We might as well bust up their baseball team for them while we're about it," he declared finally.

That was just like Rearick. He was always announcing some impossibility with the air of a man who can accomplish it by turning a faucet.

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The Kiowa baseball team had been a dark brown horror to us for the past two years. They had a pitcher who made our batters look like wigwag signals, and a thin, dark shortstop who could field sparrows. We had always suspected from the age and extreme bashfulness, off the diamond, of these two stars that they went to college purely for the uplifting associations and such financial help as might be slipped to them by a depraved baseball manager in the dark of the moon, but we had never been able to prove this. Still, we felt that anything which happened to the Kiowa team would be in the nature of justice — and it would make the annual June game a lot more comfortable to attend. So we told Rearick in hoarse whispers that we were with him to the death and please hurry up.

“Oh, very well,” said Rearick. “You fellows do the work while I do the conversation.” Then he raised his voice a few notches:

“Here, you, Bagsworth, get busy on this kettle. It won’t hurt your pitching arm to lift a little.”

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Bagsworth was the Kiowa pitcher. We set the old pot down and smothered our delight as well as we could.

"Hoist away, Simms, you little runt," said Rearick very sternly; Simms was the grabby shortstop who dieted on pickups and line drives.

The conversation from the closet ceased by this time. But Rearick was as reckless with his talk as a visitor in a deaf-and-dumb school. He kept right on.

"Steady now, Bagsworth. Hold up your end. Hurry up, boys. The rest of the faculty will be down pretty soon to bone up for tomorrow's lessons. If I had to study Sunday night to keep ahead of the class, I'd quit. That's right, Simms. You're a great little lifter. What's the matter with you, Anderson? You can't stand around and look important just because you tied a college president up in a sack. Hop in here."

Anderson was the Kiowa team's leading slugger. "Put James in too," Pierce whispered eagerly. James was the shifty Kiowa manager; and Pierce, who ran our team and was too noble

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to hire players even if he had had any money to spend on them, hated him comprehensively.

"All right," Rearick whispered back; "small orders cheerfully executed.—Who brought those rollers?" he inquired loudly. "You, Simms? Bully work, Simmsy. Say, James, just double Simms's salary, will you? Any baseball player who has as much noodle as Simms ought not to be working for any ten dollars a game. Where do you get all the money to pay Simms and Bagsy, anyway? Do you win it in those little Saturday-night poker games?"

Suddenly he whispered: "S-s-s-sh! For Heaven's sake shut up."

If there is anything more audible than a quick-firing gun, it is a good, healthy whisper. We waited anxiously. Then slowly and clearly came a voice from the washroom. It was a quiet voice, but full of expression.

"There is really no need of shutting up, young gentlemen," it said. "I have heard quite enough for all practical purposes. You may go on with your work, and tomorrow you, Mr. Bagsworth,

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and you, Mr. Simms, and you, Mr. Anderson, and you, Mr. James, may meet me in my office — unless you are determined to add murder to your other crimes.”

Rearick nudged me, and I took up the work. “Honest, Prexy, we were just fooling,” I said, speaking the exact truth. “Bagsworth and Simms and the rest of them aren’t here at all. They’re home in bed.”

“Yes, yes, undoubtedly,” said the president. He could have doubted the whole Bible with the skepticism which he put into those few words.

“If you hadn’t made a fog-horn of yourself, you fool, we’d have gotten away all right,” I said to Rearick in another of those fierce, hissing, long-distance whispers.

Then we went joyfully away with our kettle. And after we had loaded it on the wagon I slipped back and unlocked the washroom door. That shows the enormous advantage of being a college president. Anyone else could have stayed in storage all night before I would have let myself be chased a block through a dark, wet campus. How-

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ever, it is no real job to outrun a president. They neglect their training scandalously.

We had a damp and happy trip home, with only one incident to mar its monotony. About halfway over we met a bunch of toughs in a wagon. They were noisy and rude and declined to turn out for us. However, we settled this diplomatic tangle in no time. We had brought Ole Skjarsen along for just such emergencies. He led their team into the ditch, upset the wagon and dumped out a big package which they were hauling, and when the crowd jumped on him, he stood them on their heads in the deep mud, two by two. Then we righted the wagon, ran the team down the road and chased the owners after it. It pays to have a skookum fullback around college even between football seasons. The enemy didn't even come back after their cargo, and we left it lying there. We hid the sugar-kettle in a haystack just outside of town and got into bed about three o'clock, feeling as virtuous as patriots ought to feel when they have fought and bled for their country.

I awoke next morning just in time for chapel,

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and by the time I had gotten a little breakfast and had waited for Noddy Pierce to soak the sleep out of his eyes, we had to run for it. The college bell should have rung, according to our watches, when we were a block away, but it didn't. There was silence from the belfry which was only exceeded by the riot on the campus. Something had happened to the dear old coll'. It seemed to be running around in circles. We ourselves ran and collared a freshman who was apparently trying to bite some invisible host in air. He talked with difficulty, but when we had shaken him awhile, he settled down some and stopped waving his arms.

"They've s-stolen the c-college b-bell!" he spluttered.

"Who?" we demanded, preparatory to exploding, ourselves.

"T-the f-faculty don't know," the boy went on hydrophobically. "But the p-police say a wagon full of d-dirty jail-dodging s-scoundrels was seen in town late last night."

Then Pierce and I had a sickening idea simultaneously. And we hired a rig with the micro-

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scopic remains of our allowance and raced out on the Hatfield road, throwing mud in beautiful arches from the flying wheels. But the bundle at the scene of the fight was gone. Only a deep depression in the ground remained. Kiowa had stolen our bell; and we, the world's finest art works in ivory, had made them encore the performance!

For the next two days Siwash resembled an Indian indignation meeting. All the crimes recorded by shuddering historians faded into playful little misdemeanors beside this atrocity. If some miscreant had burned a college building, we would have been indignant but resigned. The trustees would have collected the insurance, and the loyal alumni would chip in enough to rebuild it twice the size. But a precious relic which couldn't be replaced had been wantonly wrenched out of our bosoms, so to speak. Any man who would wrench a relic out of a bosom was beneath civilization. The whole college suspended work and turned out to find this man or men and hand his shredded remains over to the law.

Pierce and Rearick and Ole Skjarsen and I

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hunted along with the rest, but we couldn't put any great enthusiasm into our work because we were troubled in our minds. It was our duty as loyal students to report what we had seen on the Hatfield road. But if we did, we would have to explain why we were on the Hatfield road at two A. M. on Monday morning; and this would be inconvenient, because the country was full of Kiowa men hunting for their kettle. You never saw such a rumpus as they put up about that publicity-cooker of theirs. It was sickening.

It was also puzzling. We had left the finest kind of evidence for the Kiowa faculty to work on, and yet it hadn't ordered those four baseball men to be boiled in oil. It hadn't even expelled them. We were so worried about this that I dropped over to Hatfield casually and visited with the Eta Beta Pie boys one night. I found them well but distended with rage. The president of the college, they said with clenched teeth, had suspected four of their best baseball men of the crime, and although they had produced absolutely perfect alibis, he had ordered them to return the kettle in a week

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or take their doll-things and depart into a clammy and unscholastic world. It was an outrage, they said, but the president was firm. Even the faculty had pleaded with him, but he had declared it was to be their hides or his. And as a result, the college was hunting not only for its kettle but for its baseball team. No such cruelty had been perpetrated on innocent students since presidents first began to afflict colleges.

Then I saw, of course, that the president was not going to tell the world how he had been wrapped up in a gunny-sack in his own library and filed away in a washroom. He was a proud little cuss. Three cheers for pride, said I to myself, very contentedly — and spent the night, pleasantly, a spy in a hospitable land dropping friendly reports I had heard of rumors that foreign-looking peddlers had been trying to hock a second-hand kettle in the north part of the State.

I got back to Jonesville in the morning. That noon our faculty met in special session and expelled Hogboom, our football captain; Saunders, our baseball captain; Maxwell, the college orator;

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and Bunk Bailey, our fairy-footed sprinter who was good for fifteen points in any track meet. They had been convicted of stealing the bell.

We mobbed the faculty room in a body, and old Prof. Grubb met us. He was almost mellow, he was so pleased. Expelling students was his favorite indoor sport. He was never so happy as when he was attaching a piece of extinct tinware to some innocent young athlete's college career. He smacked his lips as he talked to us.

"Yes, young gentlemen. You have been correctly informed. We have been cleaning up the student body. Vandalism and learning do not go hand in hand — Oh, yes, Mr. Rearick. I know all about alibis. No doubt the young men have perfect alibis — or will have them as soon as they can be prepared. Fortunately, we have something better than alibis this time. We have evidence. The misguided farmer who rented a team to these young miscreants came to us this morning and complained that he had received neither money nor team. And they had been so foolish as to give him their names. That will be all, I

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think — unless some of you wish to confess complicity in the deed.”

This was a frightful state of affairs. Russia is a free country compared with Siwash, where innocent men who had spent Sunday night preparing their Monday lessons in the most exemplary fashion were expelled for it with threats of prosecution for horse-stealing to boot. Hogboom was especially outraged. We had been manufacturing alibis for him for three years; and now, on the only occasion on which he had been perfectly innocent, he had been branded as a criminal and amputated from college life. What was the use of virtue, he inquired in hoarse tones. He hadn't touched the college bell. He had always intended to borrow it merely for a jest, but he hadn't gotten around to it. And now see what he had gotten for his consideration! We all raged with Hogboom, but that was all the good it did us. Pacey and Briggs, the two boys who were the keeltimbers of the Y. M. C. A. and had stood A-plus all through their courses, went in to Prexy and timidly pleaded that justice be done, and all they

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got for their pains was a look of grief on the part of Prexy, who had always believed in them. He was surprised, he said, that even they should go into the alibi business. It was very distressing. They had disappointed him. Why should a total stranger come from away beyond Hatfield to accuse these boys? What interest could he have in ruining their careers? No, Hogboom and his gang could go. Wait — out of consideration for Maxwell, who had never before committed any real crime, he would make this offer: If the boys replaced the bell in the belfry within three days, and satisfied the farmer, they could come back under grave and general suspicion — not because they had stolen the bell, but because they had tried to prove that they hadn't.

Briggs reported all this to us. And when we had heard the report, Rearick and Pierce and I went away and thought very hard. Why should a total stranger from beyond Kiowa College come over here and accuse the flower of our athletic teams? Why do two and two make four? Some Sherlock Holmes over at Kiowa had figured the

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whole thing out. They had stolen our bell, and now they wanted to eviscerate our athletic teams! Of all unchristian, back-alley, contemptible tricks this was the worst. No civilized student would have thought of it. But then we never did pretend that Kiowa was civilized.

There was only one thing to do. We had to find that bell in three days. So Pierce, Rearick and I passed rapidly through the student body voicing loud suspicions, and the next day the country around Kiowa was full of Siwash students who poked earnestly around hay-stacks and old buildings and fought at the tilt of an eyebrow. And Jonesville was full of determined-looking young strangers who seemed to be suffering from an unfilled want connected in some mysterious fashion with maple sugar. But nothing happened.

There weren't enough of us in school on the second day to make a quorum in any class. We had more important business. The faculty was quite impressed. It didn't know that the students regarded the bell with such intense devotion, and

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it softened up a good deal — but not towards Hogboom and his accomplices. We had just got to find that bell!

We spent that day investigating Hatfield with a thoroughness which caused many indignant citizens to report to the police that the neighborhood was infested with vagrants. We even invaded the Kiowa campus and poked casually around the buildings. This would have been dangerous at any other time, but it was quite safe that day. All the Kiowa students were over at Jonesville poking around the Siwash campus. So much time is wasted in this careless world. If the two faculties had exchanged colleges for the day, they might have coaxed a pretty fair attendance into the classrooms.

We hunted until late at night, but that bell of ours might as well have been a California flea. It was totally invisible. Our only comfort was the sight of several young Kiowa freshmen weeping because the backbone of their baseball team was about to depart forever. That made it evident that no prying, impertinent Kiowa student

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had come across a sugar-kettle in Siwash territory where he had no moral right to be.

All that evening Siwash students straggled back home empty in the hands and overflowing in spirit. Hogboom and his fellow victims had packed their trunks and were saying good-bys with heart-rending earnestness. They were going home never to come back except as members of the faculty. They had sworn a solemn oath to devote their lives to study and to teach in colleges for the purpose of sitting in faculty meetings and protecting young and innocent lives from the blight of unjust suspicion. We were about to snatch a few hasty lines of sleep preparatory to rising early and going over Kiowa once more with fine-toothed combs, when the door-bell rang, and Gardner of Kiowa dropped in to pay a pleasant call.

We received him politely because he was a brother and all that — and we talked of fall prospects and the way the breed of freshmen was running down and a lot of unimportant rot of that sort. But our hearts weren't in it. Neither was his. The conversation went jerkily along

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until it became perfectly evident that nobody was being fooled. We knew that Gardner hadn't come over on the midnight train to smoke a borrowed pipe and drivel about freshmen; and he knew that we knew this and were waiting for actual talk. So he cleared his throat and began:

"I hear that your college has just had a sad loss," he said.

"We have," said Allie Bangs, while all about ground their teeth in a repressed manner. "Some worthless, hen-headed hoodlums have stolen our college bell."

"That was a shame," said Gardner sympathetically. "We're even worse off, ourselves. A bunch of low, despicable vandals with no regard for the sacredness of relics broke into our library last week and took the Boggus kettle away — the grand old Boggus kettle which was worth a thousand bells —"

"It was not," cried a freshman, rising up to die for his country, but we fed him a sofa pillow and sat on him for politeness' sake.

"And the worst of it is," said Gardner, "that

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our president is sure he knows who has done it. He has suspended four of the best men on our baseball team and will expel them unless they bring the kettle back. They don't know anything about it. We can't find the kettle. We can't even argue with our president. He's quite dippy about the whole affair. It will ruin our baseball team and spoil the whole season."

"Oh, I don't know about that," said Hogboom comfortingly. "As far as we are concerned, we consider that Simms and Bagsworth would improve the baseball season by staying out of it. However, we've got troubles of our own. Our faculty has suspended four men who are as innocent as the driven snow, and how can we return an old clothes-boil—"

"The Boggus kettle, if you please," said Gardner with enormous dignity.

"Oh, all right: the Boggus kettle," snapped Hogboom, who was getting tired of being polite. "Anyway, they never heard of the Boggus kettle, and none of the rest of us know anything about it, but we do have an idea who stole our bell, and by

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jumping jimminy —” I requested him in a whisper to bottle up his feelings, and he did, though it was like swallowing a prairie fire.

“Well,” said Gardner, “the fact is we’ve got to have our baseball men back. We didn’t have anything to do with your bell, of course, but some of us happened to stumble into the junk-shop which bought it, and we might be induced to tell where —”

“*Where?*” came the inquiry in twenty frantic voices.

“Providing, of course, we could get some clue as to where our kettle is,” said Gardner firmly.

Everybody sat down as if the balloon had burst. Each man looked agonized at his neighbor.

“If anybody in this room has heard anything about Kiowa’s — er — kettle —”

“The Boggus kettle,” said Gardner firmly.

“— let him rise for the sake of his college and speak up,” concluded Hogboom.

I was the only one in the room who knew anything about the Boggus kettle. And I didn’t want to spray my information all over a large room

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filled with brothers loving but leaky as to secrets, having only about one more reprimand left to live on until time dulled the faculty's memory about certain affairs. So I sat on my secret. Gardner waited anxiously, looking about the room. Then his face darkened.

"Oh, very well," he said finally, rising to go. "I made a very fair offer, but you fellows seem to think you can get away with both ends of this deal. I'll not bother you any more. The junk-dealer told one of our men he was going to break up the bell tomorrow. It's an old, worthless —"

"*Arrrrrrrowowow*," said the entire company, making noises like a Roman mob.

"But I tell you, old man, we don't know a thing about it," yelled Hogboom very earnestly. "I don't even know, myself. And you know, if you know anything about this college, that if there was anything of that sort going on, I'd be in it."

"I do know it," said Gardner rudely, and he rose to go.

"This brother is our guest," I said with simple

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dignity, "and it ill behooves us to kill him in the house. Go over to Kiowa and do it if you like, but let us not sully our hospitality. I'll just take him to the train for safety's sake."

I did so, and on the way we bargained in the impersonal and far-away tones of two nations arranging things by diplomacy. I had heard, fortunately, of the whereabouts of the kettle. I had passed two strangers who were discussing it. It would be a pleasure to tell this hiding place. Now, where might the bell be?

The bell, Gardner had chanced to discover, would be passing along the Kiowa-Siwash road about midnight the next night. The junk-dealers —

"Oh, of course," I broke in rudely, for I really couldn't listen to the junk-dealer palaver any longer. "Well, while the bell is passing along the road, tell it to look for a soap —"

"Sugar-kettle," shouted Gardner menacingly.

"About halfway between towns at midnight?" I suggested.

"About halfway," said Gardner. "At the

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place where that darned Skjarsen jumped on us —”

“How did you know him?” I asked, waiving formalities. “It was pitch dark.”

“I knew him from the feel of his feet,” said Gardner irritably. “Lord, man, haven’t I played football against him for two years?”

At midnight on the seventh of June, A. D., Nineteen Hundred and Guess Again,—to end this story by dropping into the French style of beginning one,—a wagon might have been observed toiling through a muddy road. Within the wagon was a large, muffled object. Four men accompanied it. They were ourselves, the original heroes of the kettle abduction. Near the spot of the late conflict we met another wagon. It also held a muffled object and four men. We exchanged friendly greetings, and after considerable grunting and exertion, we exchanged cargoes.

“All right, boys,” said one of the Kiowa men. “No bones broken and no harm done. We’ll have

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our baseball team back now, and we'll see you later."

"Wait a minute!" said Rearick hastily. "What about that brash farmer who got so peeved about the horses we never saw?"

"Just an alumnus of ours," laughed the Kiowa man. "He's satisfied now. Hope you get your boys out of trouble. Perfectly satisfied, are you?"

"Perfectly," we declared.

They laughed almost jeeringly, I thought. We were good-natured ourselves until we tackled the job of putting a six-hundred-pound bell back with no tools to speak of.

Purgatory was only a reprimand compared with the rest of that night. We sprained our backs. We set the bell down on Rearick's foot, and he limped for a week. We skinned our hands on ropes. I fell out of the belfry and chipped a hip. We mixed dust, rust and perspiration until we would have passed for minstrels — and then, having hung the thing, we discovered that we had done the job backward and had to take the bell out and reverse it — and we very nearly dropped it

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through three layers of classrooms. Only Ole saved us. He held it alone for a minute. I would as soon try to portage a battleship as to hang another bell.

We got through long after daylight and rang a few triumphant peals before tottering homeward. And it wasn't until I had crawled up the steps of the Eta Bitá Pie house and had dropped into a seat that I began to sputter and shout and kick myself and call Heaven to punish us if we ever tried to depend again on what we had mistaken for our intelligence.

What was the matter, Rearick and Pierce asked. Matter enough! We had given those Kiowa Piutes a kettle to slip into a library, and they had given us a bell to lug up three stories and hang after an all-night struggle at the peril of our necks.

We were so mad over this that we refused to join in the celebration the next day but remained at home in dejected seclusion. But a quartette of lame backs had something to do with the seclusion.

VIII

LOVE AND ENGLISH HISTORY

Quarreling with Martha is more exhilarating than shooting the chutes. And it's a perfectly harmless pastime. I've quarreled with her for about eight years now — three of them in Siwash and five more since then, and as far as I remember we have never settled a single quarrel or quarreled over a subject that was worth settling. I am very proud of our system. Sometimes I think we ought to patent it. No matter what I really want to quarrel with her about, or no matter what reason she has for locking up The Hague tribunal and calling out her reserves against me, we always quarrel about English history. It's a bully idea. You can put all the enthusiasm and tobasco you please into the discussion, but you never get anywhere — most especially you don't get around to

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what you would really like to quarrel about. That's why all of our quarrels together have never panned out a drop of brine. If I ever made Martha cry I think I should go out to Lincoln Park and feed myself to the lions.

I suppose we choose English history to row about because it was English history which first brought us together when I was a howling young nuisance at Siwash and she was a compendium of useful information with a twinkle in her talk. I got acquainted because of English history — don't tell me a college education hasn't its advantages. And most of our quarrels end up with a discussion as to when I fell in love with her. She maintains that it took three years of steady effort on her part to land me. I claim that it was a case of love at first sight; that she won me by declining to become acquainted with me, and that long after I was her slave she tried to give me away to a fat girl who wore number nine shoes. She always shudders at this and so do I. It wasn't a pleasant experience for me. Martha and I went through college practically hand in hand and only parted

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long enough afterward to enable me to sandbag a Chicago bank into paying me a living salary. But there was a time — in my freshman year — when if —

Oh, well, for that matter the whole affair is full of ifs. If I had gotten as mad as I should have gotten at her indifference — if I hadn't taken up study to amuse myself that spring; if I hadn't seen that Martha's hair would be beautiful if she fluffed it up instead of tying it in a hard knot that pulled her eyebrows out of shape; and, most particularly, if I hadn't gotten a tremendous grouch in the spring of my freshman year — I never would have gotten Martha. It's fun to figure out all the ifs. Think of winning a wife by getting an acute case of dark blue colly-wabbles! If that wasn't a top-heavy reward for foolishness I'll give it up.

Now, I'm not going to tell it all, because while I'm perfectly willing to discuss other people's love affairs I simply can't seem to care to take the lid off and let the world peer into ours. How I persuaded Martha to look upon me as a pleasant di-

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version, and how I persuaded her to come down about a thousand miles and decorate existence for me — those are secrets. But I don't mind telling you how it all started. After all, that's the important part of these college affairs. It's just like rolling a snowball downhill — start it and you don't have to worry about it. It will take care of itself. That's all I really did about falling in love with Martha. I started the affair; but I didn't mean a thing by it, either. Neither did she mean anything. In fact, she was a lot meaner than I about it.

It was the calendar that really began it all. One of the most mysterious things in college life is the way the year slips by under you and goes away before you are half through with it. This never failed to surprise and grieve me. A year is such a confoundedly long affair when you look it in the face — particularly a college year. When you consider, along in September, that before June you have to go to chapel two hundred times, read through several books written in decayed languages, and figure out a chubby volume of trigo-

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I grew worse and worse until at last I got up and went away to my room, where I sat down, with a spring grouch writhing around in my healthy young vitals, as miserable as a yellow dog in a snowdrift.

I could see everything plainly then. My foolish eyes were opened. College days were so precious that after-life would be morgue-like compared with them. And there were only a pitifully few college days. I had used up nearly a quarter of mine already! Used them up in frivolous ways—squandered them like a drunken sailor; spent whole hours loafing in my room and oversleeping instead of getting out and soaking in the glorious friendships so soon to be severed forever. Why, even now preparations for commencement were beginning! In a few weeks the boys would be gone. Some of them would never come back. Bangs might stay at home the next year. Allen was doubtful about returning—at least the faculty was doubtful for him. Even I might never see Siwash again. I had wasted the only year I might have in college.

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I writhed for several days as I thought of all this. Then my mood changed. I became savage, implacable, bitter — at myself. I began to kick myself, mentally, around the campus. I had no mercy. “You are a loafer — swat. You have wasted your father’s hard-earned money — swat. Just last week you got a new suit of clothes and ruined it in a chapter house scuffle — swat — swat. You go through your studies without troubling yourself to understand them — swat. You are frivolous — swat. You will waste your college years and live forever with only some insignificant job between you and the poorhouse — swat. Serves you right — swat — swat — swat.”

It was fine exercise, but hard on the feelings. For over a week I was unfathomably dejected. My kind roommate, Bingo Bailey, fussed around me and tried to get me to soak my head or take a large drink of kerosene, but I merely threw things at him and declined his suggestions.

But gradually my mental turmoil settled down into one fixed accusation. Bad as my other crimes were there was one which surpassed them in asi-

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ninity. I was feather-headed on the girl question. It was a fearful and degrading truth. I, Petey Simmons, a grown-up man of eighteen and president of his class, to say nothing of being molder of destinies — hadn't I helped mold Boggs' destiny? — was a plaything in the hands of designing females. A pretty girl could smile at him and bid him follow in a shy voice, and thereupon he neglected friends and studies and made himself that girl's slave. I wriggled and perspired with shame when I thought of it. Hadn't I spent three valuable weeks trying to steal a collection of street car signs for Miss Severance? And why? She had given me two dances and walked to chapel with me. Hadn't I bought a whole banquet in a basket and risked expulsion by climbing up the fire escape and leaving said basket where Miss Ayleswing and Miss Dunmore could find it? And why? Because they had confided to me that I was clever. Hadn't I toted Miss Willoughby to parties, concerts and theaters with terrific devotion for two months, only to find that she was working hand in glove with the Fly Gams to beat our man

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for the editorship of the college annual? On my very first day in college hadn't I been captured bodily by two designing young women and hauled over to the Shi Delt house to be presented to them with their compliments — a dainty young thing in green?

It was awful. I had no stamina whatever. Swiftly I reviewed my six or seven master passions of the year. Every one of them was a pretty face. Whether the face concealed a brain or not I had never thought to wonder. A peach-blow complexion, a companionable smile, a light foot in the dance — that was my conception of lovely woman. Bah!

When I thought about this for several days it began to have its effect. I became quiet and powerful within and stern lines developed about my mouth. I could see them in the glass quite plainly. I was no longer a trusting child to be sent toddling hither and yon by a woman's voice. I was a grown man with great purposes in life and I had precious little room in it for women. Acting on this impulse I broke a date with Miss

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Willoughby with brutal directness, and declined my invitation to the annual party of the Kappa Kap Pajamas. I would ignore the sex entirely during the rest of my college course. Men had too much to do in college to be bothered by the woman question.

It was quite pleasant picturing myself a strong, indifferent character about whom all Browning Hall raved ineffectually. I thought of the plans which would be laid each fall by new and unsophisticated girls to surround and capture me, and of the scorn of the older girls as they informed them that I was unapproachable and impregnable. It would be great. I could hardly wait for the senior year to come in order to enjoy my reputation. No more girls for me. The whole sex could take notice.

But suddenly I had a better idea. Other men had become soured and had thrown down the girl question. But I could do something more. After all, the sex was not useless. There were fine women and intelligent women — delightful companions and intellectual comrades. I would be

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large instead of merely indifferent. I would pick out the brightest girl in my class and win her friendship. I would show her attention and be her best friend no matter whether she was merely plain or so homely that I would thank her whenever she wore a veil.

This was a really splendid idea. It was a lot bigger than the other. As soon as I had conceived it I forgot all about my grouch. There was nothing left of it but my stern resolve. As a matter of fact, the resolve was a little weak in the back, too. For, as I convalesced, the idea of causing pain and sorrow to all those beautiful and trusting young girls became intolerable and I hastily recalled my regrets to the Kappa Kap party.

I had suffered severely, however, and I was bound to give my idea a trial. I needn't carry this intellectual friendship business to extremes. But I could pick out the girl — a plain one — and at least go and call on her. That would show my firmness of mind and discriminating character. Maybe I would even take her to a party. Of course, the fellows would ask me a lot of pointed

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and supposedly funny questions, but a strong-minded man would not mind that, and I would get a reputation for indifference to trifles out of it, too. So I began to look over my class for possible candidates for my high-minded and intelligent friendship.

I must say there were plenty of possibilities. I was surprised to discover how many young ladies in the freshman class had entirely escaped my notice. As I say, I had had a frivolous and beauty-hunting eye. But now that I had started hunting for plain worth I was overwhelmed with candidates. I would look at two or three of them earnestly and then go away and rest for a while. There were tall, thin girls; short, stout girls; old girls with spectacles, and nondescript girls with clothes which fitted them tightly about the neck and nowhere else in particular. I began to wonder how I was going to find, among all these girls, the one who might prove to be the most sensible and entertaining. Of course, I might go and call on all of them in turn, but I balked at this. It would take too much time and suffering, and be-

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sides there were two or three girls — technically speaking — in the class, any one of whom might be the logical candidate, and, to tell the truth, I didn't have the nerve to take the chance.

I sat through half a dozen classes looking over the collection and sizing them up from their recitations, and I finally decided that Miss Martha Scroggs would just about do. She was a thin, freckled girl, bright but not gaudy, with severe hair tied up to be out of harm's way — a girl whom I had passed on the campus until I had gotten perfectly familiar with her hat, without ever once looking at her face. But she had a breezy way of sizing up the great has-beens in English history which pleased me. She was a girl who might be really entertaining. I decided to talk with her, to call on her, and to become her friend. It would be a just recognition of her abilities, anyway. It was a shame that so many of the really deserving and able young women should be condemned to loneliness because their faces didn't happen to embellish the college scenery. I, Petey Simmons, would not submit to this injustice and Martha

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Scroggs, the brightest girl in the class, should have a good time if I had any say about it.

Full of this fine resolution, I slid out of history class rapidly one day and fell in beside the young lady as she trotted off toward the library. "Believe me, Miss Scroggs," I said, lifting my hat, "you certainly handled old Henry, the wife-collector, without gloves today."

She turned quickly and looked at me. Then I remembered that I had never met Miss Scroggs. Of course, we had been in the same class and all that, but I realized that I had never tripped over any chairs earlier in the year fighting for an introduction. She looked at me, not in an unfriendly way, with a sort of curiosity — as if I had been some new kind of bug. I felt my fool face beginning to blush — I have an awful time with that face of mine — but I wasn't going to back out, and I toddled right along, waiting to take whatever she chose to hand me.

Miss Scroggs looked at me some more with a sort of perplexed air. Suddenly her face brightened.



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"Oh, yes, I know now!" she exclaimed. "You're the little man who hides behind Mr. Pierce, aren't you?"

"Huh!" I said indignantly. Pierce was a football man and broad, and I had dodged a number of flunks by sitting very quietly behind him. But I didn't care to have the whole class notice it. I stiffened up to my full height. "Miss Scroggs," said I, "you know my name and you know you know it, and you also know I know you know it."

"Oh," she said, "I've heard you referred to as Mr. Simmons, but it's so much nicer to get information first hand and accurately."

"My name is Simmons," I said, bowing low, "'Petey' Simmons."

"I'm so glad to meet you, Mr. Simmons," said she, putting out her hand. "Good morning." Then she turned into the library and left me.

After I had thought of this incident for the rest of the day and most of the evening I decided to be even larger than I had any idea I could be and overlook the whole thing. It was natural that Miss Scroggs should be a little confused by my

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unexpected friendliness. Possibly she was even suspicious. It did seem queer, undoubtedly, for me to take so sudden an interest in her. Anyway, she wasn't used to attention. I might have to persevere very gently so as not to frighten her. But she was a bright little girl and deserved notice and, confound it, she was going to get it.

I bowed eagerly to Miss Scroggs in class the next day, and she responded pleasantly enough. This I found was a tactical blunder of mine. If I said "Good morning" in class there was no excuse to say it afterward. So I put the attack off until the following day. Of course, I wasn't afraid of her. Nothing could be more nonsensical than this idea. But I was going to do things just right this time. I hate to blush. It is wearing on my disposition.

I had a chance to take off my hat and say "Good morning" to Miss Scroggs on the following day and on the day after that, but that was all. She was always surrounded by girl friends. They were the plain and unadorned members of the class, but they seemed to enjoy each other so much

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that I hated to burst ruthlessly in on their ranks and take Miss Scroggs away. It made me mad, however. It was Friday and now I would have to wait until Monday to become intimately acquainted with her. Somehow, seeing her hedged about by forbidding females and entirely inaccessible, made me more anxious than ever to begin the friendship, and Sunday seemed a long day.

On Monday conditions were very favorable. I cut in ahead of the bodyguard going out, and followed Miss Scroggs down the stairs. She was mine. I was quite excited. "Good morning," I said pleasantly, raising my hat. I was about to fall into step with her and walk over to the library. But I didn't. She turned and spoke to me very pleasantly but from the next planet, and suddenly I became afraid that if I walked with her I might bore her. Perhaps she didn't want to be bothered with me that day. I didn't want to make a bad impression to start with. I passed on rapidly the other way, and by the time I had walked around the college buildings I was indignant. What was the matter with me, anyway?

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This was the only time Petey Simmons had ever shown the white feather. What was he afraid of? He ought to be kicked.

I cussed myself liberally and resolved that the next day I would walk with Miss Scroggs to the library and get her permission to call if I had to wade through the whole body-guard to do it. It was no longer a joking matter with me. My blood was up. Besides, I really wanted to become acquainted with Miss Scroggs. I hadn't been half as anxious when I started out. But now I shuddered at the thought that I had considered picking out some of those unattractive girls. That would have been an awful blunder.

I got a bow and a smile out of Miss Scroggs the next day, but she had her gang with her. I was rather relieved when I saw it, too. After all, this was no mere campus enterprise to be conducted hastily between classes. I would waylay her and walk home with her. To be sure, she lived in the opposite part of town, but I had lots of business out that way. I had neglected it all that year and now it was pressing. I cruised dejectedly behind

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her for two evenings while she and two of her pestiferous girl friends chattered gaily homeward. Once I got a bow from her at her gate, but that was all. Business was certainly poor.

By the end of the second week I was discouraged. Never before had I realized just how hard it was to get acquainted with a plain girl. If Miss Scroggs had been pretty and a member of the Kappa Kap Pajamas, or the Tri Felta Kaps, or the Kappa Alpha Pussicats I wouldn't have had any trouble at all. I would have hunted up some chap who knew her and made him take me to call, and that would have ended it. But here was a young lady who sat in class, twenty feet away from me, four times a day, and who was as inaccessible as an Alpine peak. I didn't know anybody who knew her. I never went anywhere she did. Even if I got up another freshman party she probably wouldn't come. There wasn't any peril to rescue her from. Confound it! Why was college so pitifully devoid of all means of getting acquainted with kindred intellects?

I was quite worked up over it, as much for Miss

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Scroggs' sake as for mine. But in the third week I had a great stroke of good luck. I wandered into the library one afternoon and found Miss Scroggs reading — alone. I was as excited as if I had discovered the heroine on the four hundred and thirty-fifth page. I approached stealthily, to avoid alarming her, and sat down beside her.

"Working hard?" I asked, with a perfectly magnificent smile.

She smiled back. "Very," she said.

Any other girl I knew would have put down her books. I felt a slight jolt. But I was there and I defied the whole college to remove me. "I wish I could work as hard as you do," I said enviously. At that moment I really meant it.

She looked around the library and then at me. "I've only got one of the books," she said cordially.

This time the jolt was quite decided. But I wouldn't give up. "If I get a nice large book will you straighten me out on Queen Elizabeth's family?" I asked. "I simply cannot get the old girl's kin untangled."

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"I've got to get my French," said Miss Scroggs, hastily, "but I'll call Miss Evans over. She's splendid in English history and I know she'll be glad to help you."

Then she went away before I could object and hauled Miss Evans over to me. Miss Evans was a peculiar looking, well-seasoned lady, with thick glasses and a gummy smile that would have warded off a burglar. She was delighted to help me, and she did it while Miss Scroggs went away to a neighboring table and studied French, in which, heaven knows, I needed help far more than I did in history. It was a contemptible trick. I couldn't get away from the Evans until class time, and my mind wandered so much that I got Lizzie's family more mixed up than ever, and tipped over a big laugh in class while I tried to sort them out.

The boys at the house asked me a lot of supposedly smart questions that night about my new affair with Miss Evans, but I took it very scornfully, even if it did hurt. I was all messed up in my mind. Was it possible that Miss Scroggs didn't care to be bothered with me? No, it

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wasn't. But she certainly was discouraging. However, Petey Simmons never was a quitter. I didn't want to quit, anyway. I would have given a lot to sit around in that college library for a couple of hours with Miss Scroggs and have her sparkle away to me the way she did to those confounded girl friends. She looked as if she could be perfectly delightful if she felt that way.

I found out what church the Scroggses frequented the next week and decided to shift my attack. If I couldn't associate in college with Martha — I decided that I would call her that to myself because I liked the name — I would go out and use a church in cold-blooded fashion for the purpose. I went to two church socials and found Martha at the second one. It seemed to me she was perhaps one thirty-second of a degree more cordial in her greeting — at any rate she bowed to me before I jogged her attention — and I made the most of it. I trailed around with her and behind her for half an hour, fighting my way through mobs of girl friends — I never saw a girl so cursed with girl friends — and after having

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gotten two distinct laughs from her by a line of talk that would have reduced one of the Browning Hall beauties to helpless mirth I came right out and asked her if I couldn't walk home with her. My knees shook when I did it.

"Why, there isn't the slightest use of that, Mr. Simmons," she said kindly. "Ralph Madison lives next door and he'll take care of me."

Ralph Madison was a town student — a sophomore whose only prominent point was his teeth. He was a sissy and a nincompoop, and when he walked carelessly up and said "Ready, Martha?" I could have bitten him in two. They went off together like old and well-worn friends, and I went out into the night and planned murder and arson for three hours.

Anyway, that ended it. I'd laid my pride down before Miss Scroggs, and she had not only walked on it, but had wiped her feet on it. I'd tried to make a friend and companion out of a girl who would probably never have another chance to mingle with a real masculine mind. And what was the result? She had laughed at me. Very

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well, I would give up my large-minded idea and go back and dally with the charming girls of the school. I had been a fool for neglecting them, anyway. They were, at least, kind and appreciative.

For a week or more I soused myself in society and attended the Kappa Kap party with tremendous success, not less than eight girls confessing that they could die dancing with me. But I didn't enjoy myself. Somehow society seemed as unsatisfactory as a fifth dish of ice cream. I got to hanging around the library between classes — not in the hope of talking with Martha — I wouldn't have tried that again for a farm — but because it seemed kind of homelike in there, and I liked to watch her studying with her raincoat and tam on — they became her more than I supposed would be possible. I got considerably interested in English history, too, while I was wasting time there. I had to amuse myself some way — and I did a lot of reading in the hope that some day I could get up unexpectedly and recite to young Professor Harris until he choked me off. It

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would be such a stunning surprise to him, coming from me. I chuckled at the thought of it. So I filled up on Macaulay until I was a walking biography of William of Orange, and one day when Professor Harris ordered me up to do my usual tight wire balancing act between a flunk and a "passable" I sailed into the English for their attitude to Dutch Billy like a prosecuting attorney arraigning a chicken thief.

Professor Harris had only escaped from England about two generations back, and he bristled up when I tried to explain how sweet it was in the beef-bolters to invite William over with his army, and then, after using them, to boot said army out of the country as a nuisance—in a perfectly polite and well-bred manner, of course—the English are always polite. So we had a little ten-minute bicker, and every time Professor Harris got a hammer lock on me I managed to fall back a generation or two and grab up some other English political crime which I had run across in the last week. So I came out of the deal without more than one shoulder on the mat, but

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pretty much worried — for Professor Harris was determined to avenge his precious England, and I saw where it was up to P. Simmons to keep on stoking in history at the rate of one quarto volume a day.

I hurried over to the library after class and had just gotten Hume and Macaulay stacked up, one on each side, when I looked up and saw Miss Scroggs sitting near me and looking at me. She ducked her head with her peculiar little smile and bow. It warmed me clear to my shoes. I bowed back and went to work all cheered up. But I hadn't gotten more than a page or two worried down when some one dropped a note going by. It was from Miss Scroggs.

"Three cheers for the Dutch," it read. "Reinforcements coming by forced marches."

I smiled across to her and waved my hand around my head, meaning "Hurrah for our side" and "Soc et tu um," and other things. It made me feel mighty good and I decided, when we ran out of Dutch complications in English history, to jump in on the French side, if necessary, and keep

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up the fight. After all, it was a lot of fun to joust with a professor. It was as exciting as baseball.

Some one sat down by me and I closed the book. It was Miss Scroggs. She was just a plain girl, as I have carefully explained, and I can't see why I went so dotty and nervous all over just because she came over to talk to me. I suppose it was because —

At least that was the only reason I could discover.

"I've come over to ask you if you've ever read Motley on William," she asked. "He's dandy."

"I'll get him now," I said promptly. I got up, but hesitated a minute. While I was gone she would go away, of course. I decided I wouldn't go away. Then I thought I'd better. Then I didn't know what to think. I looked down at Martha pleadingly. She looked up and didn't bat an eye. "I'll find the place for you when you come back," she said.

THE END

